

VEDANTHAM Vs SAIVA SIDDHANTAM

A comparative study and the development of the
latter from the earliest times



R. Namasivayam

TITLE

**Vedantam Vs
Saiva Siddhantam**

AUTHOR

R. Namasivayam ©

Attorney - At - Law

President,

Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society.

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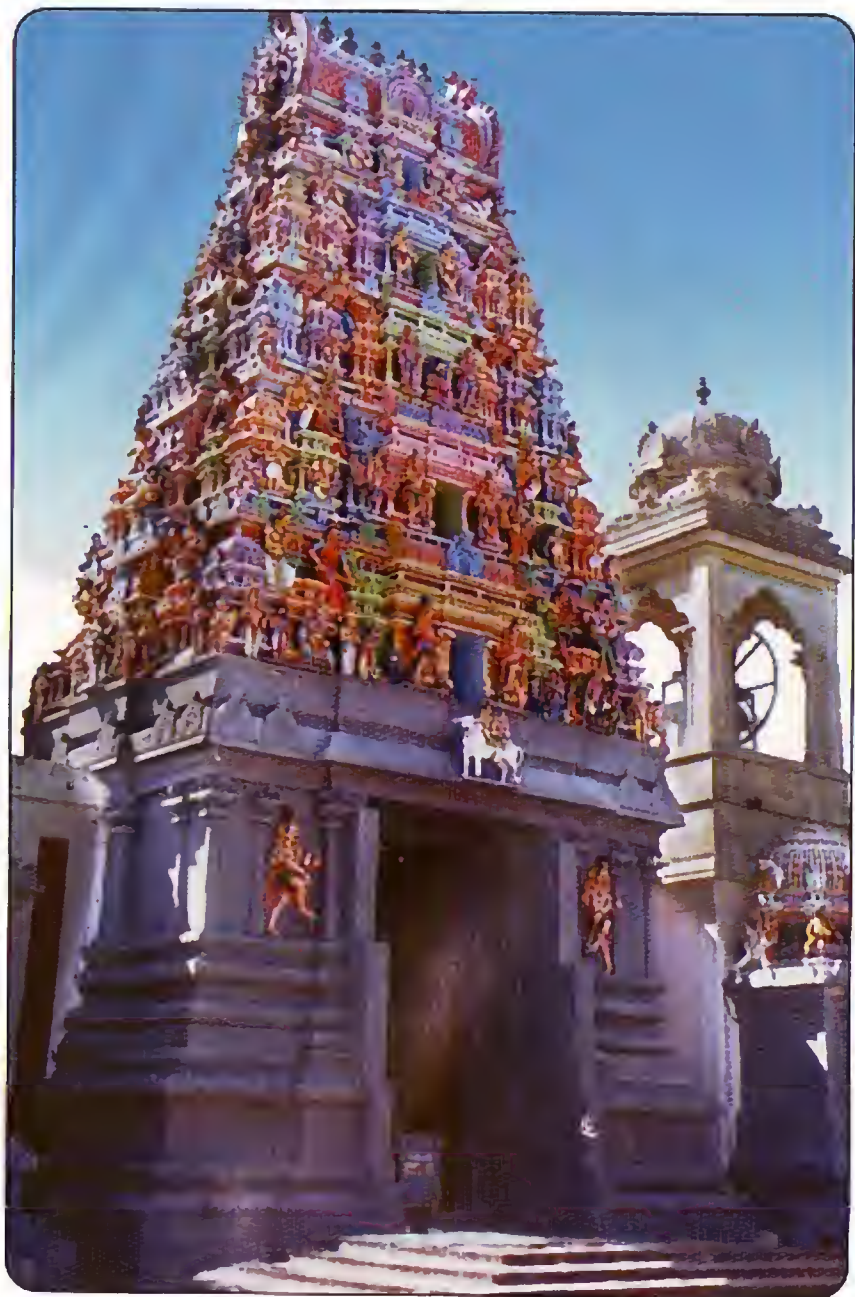
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கௌரி அம்பாள்



நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பி



இராஜராஜ சோழன்

Foreword

This book, Vedantam Vs Saiva Siddhantam a comparative study and the development of the latter from the earliest times gives a bird's eye-view of Siddhanta from the historical point of view. It also highlights some of the distinctive philosophical concepts which are logically coherent and practically more viable than other systems of thought including that of Sankara.

The Dravidians had a settled way of life. Hence, their culture and civilization were more advanced than the nomadic Aryans. This has been testified by the excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa (Indus Valley Civilization - 2500 B.C). Later excavations have shown that this culture was spread throughout the Indian sub-continent.

Since the Tamils alone had an early classical civilization, religion and literature of their own, quite distinct from the vedic heritage of the Aryans, the author is justified in tracing the lineage of the Tamils from the Indus valley Civilization. The concept that the vedic Aryans were civilized, and the indigenous Dravidians were barbarous, is a myth perpetuated by partisan and prejudiced writers of history. The author holds, and rightly so, that the Tamils had their written religious scripture (āgamās), when the Aryans were at the stage of oral tradition.

Saivism the religion of the Tamils has had a chequered history, touching its lowest ebb during the Kalapiras and the early part of the pallava regimes, getting revived through the Bhakti movement of the three great samaya-acharyas front the latter part of the pallava regime and ascending to its highest golden peak during the chola Dynasty (9th to 13th Century A.D.)

The canonisation of the Saiva Thirumurais took place from the 11th to 13th Century and was complete when Periapuranam was included as the 12th canon.

The Thirumurais formed the basis for the philosophical theology of *Sivajananbodham*, the first of the fourteen Meikanda Sastras. Though there are several commentaries on *Sivajananabodham*, Sivajnanamuniar's *Sivajnanamapadiam* is hailed as the best and held in high esteem by the Siddhantins, for it upholds the Siddhanta faith in the three categories of Pati, Pasu and Pasa by providing a solid philosophical foundation.

From the 15th Century onwards the Saiva Maths and their Adhenams took upon the noble task of preserving, expounding and propagating the religion and philosophy of Siddhanta.

However, in the course of its history, Saivism has absorbed several elements from the vedic religion, while retaining its distinct identity. The author, for example, points out the fact that image worship and temple culture are exclusively Dravidian.

The author, Thiru R. Namasivayam deserves all appreciation for having taken enormous pains to present the history of saiva Siddhanta in a nut - shell and Schieving the purpose the establishing the independent origin and development of saivism. I am sure, this book will find favour with the students and scholars of Siddhanta.



Dr. P. Krishnan,
Professor and Head Department
of Saiva Siddhanta,
University of Madras
Chennai 600 005.

INTRODUCTION

Hinduism is a group of religions with their respective philosophical systems.

The most important philosophical systems of Hinduism are Vedantam and Saiva Siddhantam.

The best known proponents in recent times of Vedantam were Swami Vivekananda and Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan; their speeches and writings helped Vedantam to gain credence in the West.

The chief characteristics of Saiva Siddhantam is its scientific and logical basis. It is pre-eminently scientific and the most modern scientific findings of the West are concordant with it.

Edwin Hubble from California, U.S.A an athlete and ex boxer, had given up a promising career in Law in order to study Heavens showed that the universe had not existed for ever as most astronomers

Note :

Vide "After Glow of Creation " by Marcus Chown graduated at the University of London in 1980 with a first class degree in physics and subsequently a Master of Science in Astro Physics.

End of the most dazzling achievements, of human thought has been the law "Big Bang" the hypothetical beginning of the Universe in which the whole of space and time was created in an infinitesimally small point which has expanded outwards for the past 10-20 billion years into the universe we know today - John Gribbin & Simon Goodwin

The developemnt of an understanding of how the universe evolved from a super-hot, superdense state - the Big Bang - into the state we see today " vide "ORIGINS" - "Our place in Hubble's universe"

By John Gribbon & Simon Goodman

Constable - Londin 1997

"Origins - Our Place In Hubble's Universe

Constable - London 19997

The causative factor of the "infinitesimally point." is enigmatic Mayai postulated in the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy

believed, but it had a beginning. Further he had found that sometime in the remote past a violent explosion took place. It was described as the "Big Bang". It was an explosion unlike any other. No void existed before this "Big Bang". There was literally nothing.

The "Big Bang" created everything and that included empty "space" (Akayam) matter and even "time" (kalam).

The Agamic meaning of the word "MAYAI" is that which involves and evolves, that of "LINGAM" the Saiva Symbol of God and the lovely bronze image of Lord Nadarajah are that which Symbolizes involution and evolution among others. Mayai is real according to Saiva Siddhantam and from it the Universe evolves. Sivaperuman to redeem the Athmas (souls) from suffering and pain and too enable them to attain the eternal and boundless Bliss at His lotus like feet gives them the three forms of bodies from Mayai. The "said bodies" give circumscribed joy, knowledge and power of action to the Athmas. This is explained thus by Umapathy Sivachariar, the last of the Santana Achariar of Saivam.

"விடிவாமளவும் விளக்கனைய மாயை
வடிவாதிகள் மத்துவந்து."

"Carl Sagan' a Scientist of international repute in his book "Cosmos" 1995. (pages 284-286) made the following observation relating to Saiva Siddhantam Concept of Creation and Destruction infinite in number and the great Oneness and all things evolving from the Oneness . (Ekan)

"The Chola Bronzes cast in the eleventh century A.D. includes several different incarnations of the God Siva. The most elegant and sublime of these is a beginning of each cosmic cycle, motif known as the "cosmic dance of Siva" The God called in the manifestation NADARAJAH the dance king, has four hands. In the upper right hand is a drum which sound is the sound of creation, in the upper left hand is a tongue of flame, reminder that the universe now newly created will billion of years from now be utterly destroyed."

These profound and lovely images are 'I like to imagine' a kind of premonition of modern astronomical ideas."

Dr. Fritjof Capra a research scientist of international repute in high energy physics, in his preface to the second edition of his book, the international best seller, "Tao of physics" (1983) states, "Five years ago, I had a beautiful experience which set me on a road that has led to the writing of this book. I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon, watching the waves falling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing, when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic "cosmic dance".

"Being a physicist I knew that the sands, rocks, water and air around me were made of vibrating molecules and atoms and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating, destroying other particles. I knew also that the earth's atmosphere was continually bombarded by showers of cosmic rays, particles of high energy undergoing multiple collisions as they penetrated the air. All this was familiar to me from my research in high energy physics, but until that moment I had only, experienced it through graphs, diagrams and mathematical theories. As I sat on that beach my former experience came to life; I saw cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses; I saw the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in the cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I heard its sound and at that moment I knew that this was the Dance of Siva, the Lord of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus". The image of Lord Nadaraj - it should be remembered is a Saiva Siddhanta concept.

Thus Saiva Siddhantam and Saiva Religion of late have gained wide credence amongst western scientists and intellectuals.

"Mayai" which is real is not discernible and is beyond the concept of modern science.

The ultimate indivisible component or particles of energy is evolved from "Mayai" which in turn becomes an atom, molecules and finally as matter. Similarly when the universe is destroyed it finally involves as Mayai. Prof., Einstein's famous equation - $E = Mc^2$ represents this energy.

The well known postulate of Saiva Siddhantam is something cannot come of nothing or become nothing. This is a acknowledged scientific principle known in Saiva Siddhantam as "Satkariavatham".

Secondly Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and its principles are based on logical rules to give it a characteristic quality as a rational philosophical system. The "Supakkam" (part) of Sivagnana Siddhiar of Arulnandi Sivam following the Sivagnana Bhodam of his guru Meikandar, in the first three sutras out of the twelve as a prelude entitled "Pramana iyal" (பிராமண இயல்) laid down the logical rules that could be adopted to establish the realities of God, Soul, Anavam (ego) karma and Mayai and the attainment of Sivagnanam and moksha. This is a unique feature of Meikanda shastras.

Sivagnana Siddhiar states :

"அருளினால் ஆகமத்தே அறியலாம் - அளவினாலுந்
தெருளலாஞ் - சிவனை ஞானச் செய்தியாற் சிந்தையுள்ளே
மருளெலா நீங்கக் கண்டு வாழலாம் பிறவிமாயா
இருளெலாமி ரிக்கலாகும் அடியாரோடு இருக்கலாமே."
சிவஞானசித்தியார் - payiram (6)

"It is possible by the grace of God, to know him by the teachings contained in the Agamas, and also by proper argumentation and to perceive Him in our heart by Gnana Sadhana, our doubt having vanished and to get the darkness of Maya removed, and to dwell in the company of the Holy" = Translation by J. M. Nallaswamy pillai.

Finally Saiva Siddhantam is also based on epistemology (Theory of knowledge) - Arivuu Alavai Iyal. In the history of the Indian philosophical systems, when they were established positively, both logic and episte-mology became indispensable. (Vide "சைவசித்தாந்தத்தின்" அடிப்படைகள் - வ. . ஆ தேவசேனாதிபதி).

The epistemology of the Vedanta is the Four Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Smiritis Bhasyam of Adi Sankarar and the sutras of Badarayana.

Note :

The word "Pramana" is a Sanskrit derivative word. In Tamil it is known as "Alavi Iyal."

Sankarar was the great expounder of Vedanta philosophy, but he was not the founder of the system. Gaudapada, who was Samkara's teacher's teacher, was the first systematic expounder of Advaitam.

The epistemology of the Saiva Siddhanta is the Four Vedas, Twenty, eight Saiva agamas, Eighteen puranas, Panniru thirumurai and the fourteen Meikanda shastras.

Saiva Siddhantam has always a Catholic out look. It is not constricted by any blinkers. Saiva Siddhantam postulates that one need not accept anything as authentic however ancient it may be or reject anything new because it is of recent origin.

"தொன்மையவாமெனு மெவையு நன்றாகா வின்று
தோன்றியநூ லெனு மெவையும் தீதாகாதுணிந்த
நன்மையினார் நலங்கொள்மணி பொதியுமதன் களங்க
நவையாகா தெனவுண்மை நயந்திடுவர்னடுவாந்
தன்மையினார் பழமையழ காராய்ந்து தரிப்பர்
தவறு நலம் பொருளின் கட்வார் வாராய்ந் தறித
வின்மையினார் பலர் புகழி லேந்துவரே திலரும்
றிகழ்ந்தனரே லிகழ்ந்திடுவாதமக்கென வொன்றிலரே."
சிவப்பிரகாசம் - அவையடக்கம்

"whatever is old cannot be deemed to be good on account of antiquity alone and whatever book come today cannot be judged not good of its newness. Those who have no capacity to judge the faults and excellencies will praise it if others denigrate it and will condemn it on hearing others speak ill of it because they have no opinion of own".

Saiva Siddhantam does not condemn other religions or philosophical systems as false.

God has provided each with the religion or philosophy best suited to him according to his or her state of enlightenment or capacity (Pakkuvam). Even Nihilism is acceptable to God.

Saiva Siddhantam defines a true religion as one which comprises within itself the best of all religions in proper perspective without denouncement.

This is what Sivagnana Siddhiar States :

"ஓதுசம யங்கள் பொருள் உணரும் நூல்கள்
ஒன்ட றோடொன் றொவ்வாமல் உளபவும் இவற்றுள்
யாதுசம யம்பொருள்நூல் யாதிங் கென்னின்
இதுவாகும் அதுவல்லதெனும் பிணக்கதின்றி

நிதியினால் இவையெல்லாம் ஓரிடத்தேகாண
 நின்றதியா தொருசமயம் அதுசமயம் பொருள்நூல்
 ஆதலினான் இவையெல்லாம் அருமறையாகமத்தே
 அடங்கியிருமே அவைஇரண்டும் அரனடிக் கீழிடங்கும்."

"Religions postulates and text books are various and conflict one with the other. It is asked which is the true religion, which is the true postulation and which is the true book, the answer is as follows : That is the true religion, postulate and book which does not conflict with this or that and comprises everything just within its folds. Since they are found as knowledge in the Vedas and Siva Agamas revealed by all knowing Lord Siva. Vedas and Siva Agamas repose at the Sacred feet of Lord Siva".

Sivagnana Siddhiar supakkam states that for the six categories of religions the goal is Lord Siva-(Stanza I payiram Man ga-LaValthu).

Stanza 115 of Siddhiar States whatever deity you propitiate, Lord Siva only appears as that deity and answers your prayers.

Saint Navukkarasar in his, "Thiruperu Velur Patthikam sings thus :

"விரிவிலா றெவினர்கள் வேறொரு சமயஞ் செய்து
 எரிவினாற் சென்னாரேனும் எம்பிராற் கேற்றதாகும்."

"A bigot out of anger or spite founds aNew Religion, it is acceptable to Lord Siva".

The Veera Saivam, Kashmir Saivam. Vallalar's New cult of Samarasa Sanmargam, Hawai Saivam, U. S. A. of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniya Swamy and the Meickander Atheenam of U. K. have by passed one or more of the aforementioned epistemological basis of saiva siddhantam: hence they are considered as heterodox systems even though they have some common features and similarities with saiva Siddhantam.

Hawai Saivam is actually an admixture of Monism and the remnant of western "CHRISTIANITY"

* Note I :

The division of the Thirumurai into Cantos was done by saint Nambiandar Nambigal or Thirunaraiyur at the behest of the great king Rajarajah is the Thirumurai kanda Cholas who retrieved Moovar Thevaram from an ant hill with divine assistance and his son Rajendran I.

"Thirumanthiram" is considered as a Thirumurai and is assigned as the tenth canto.*

It has devotional Hymns but not exclusively. Thirumanthiram, deals with Saiva Siddhantam, Vedantam, Mayavatham, Vaishnavam etc. all in a general way.. It also deals with subjects that are not relevant to Saiva Siddhantam such as yogas of different sorts, Chakkarams, yantrams, transmigration of souls etc.. A general code of conduct which are strictly not relevant to saiva Siddhantam is embodied in the Thirumanthiram.

Research scholars have recently discovered interpolations and inclusion of whole verses in the Thirumanthiram.

On the other hand the Meikanda shastrams deals exclusively on Saiva Siddhantam, they are systematic elaborate and exhaustive and have been, since the time of Meikandar accepted as the standard books on Saiva Siddhantam and as such accredited by the Saiva world.

Meikandar and his Spiritual Lineage were as divine as Thirumular. His birth too was pre-ordained similar to that of Thiruganana sampanthar. They were all knowing with absolute knowledge.

Meikandar was born to reiterate 'Saiva Nannery'* at a Critical period.

The following Thevara Hymn of Thirugnanasambandar refers to his preordained birth.

Lord Siva sent him back to the earth to save "Saiva Neri from the throes of Godless Jainism" and its monks who were bigots. The Thevara Trio led by Thirugnanasambander re-established Saivaneri.

*** Note 1 :**

Nannery is Religion

Note 2 :

திருமந்திரம் என வழங்கும், சதாசிவ ஆகமம் டாக்டர் சுப அண்ணாமலை எம். ஏ. பி. ஏச்சு இந்தியப் பண்பாட்டு ஆராய்ச்சி நிறுவனம் 84 கலா ஷேத்ராசாலை திருவான்மியூர் - 600 041 முதற்பதிப்பு ஆகஸ்டு 1997

Note 3 :

Thirumular was beatified as one of 63 Nayanmars (saints). Sundaramoorthi Nayanar refers to him as "Tambiran Thirumoolar:". Nambiandar Nambigal in Thiruthoondar Thiruanthathi and Sekkilar in his epic Periapuranam a biography of the 63 Saints have extolled the greatness of Thirumoolar. Thirumular was more than a siththar. He was a Jeevanmuththar.

"தூறகடகுமா சொலபடாய் துருத்தியாய் திருந்த
 டிறக்குமா நிலாத என்னை மையல் செய்திம்மண்ணின்மேல்
 பிறக்குமாறு காட்டினாய் பிணிப்படும் உடம்புவிட்
 டிறக்குமாறு காட்டினாய்க் கிழக்குகின்ற தென்னையே."

Second-Thirumurai of thiruthuruthi

"O Lord of thiruthuruthi,
 Your sacred feet are
 Ceaseless from My Thoughts
 You inveigled me and directed me
 To be born again on this earth
 To face disease and death
 Thus I am distressed."

There is absolute harmony in the postulations of Thirumanthiram and Meikanda Shastras. In the circumstance it is blasphemy to say there is a long standing dispute and there are two schools of Saiva Siddhantam-Meikandar School and Thirumoolar school - and there is confusion among the adherents of Saiva Siddhantam. This alleged dispute and confusion are a figment existing in the imagination of some misguided persons who are promoting them.

In the post Meikandar Santana period there were several eminent scholars of Saiva Siddhantam who were commentators of the Meikanda Shastras and other related works on Saiva Siddhantam. They took cognizance of all other philosophical systems prevailing then and commented on them on a comparative bases.

In the 15th century A. D. there were great scholars Pandiperumal, Maraignana Sambanda Desikar, Niramba Alagia Desikar, Gnanaprakasas, Velliambalavana Munivar, Sivkkiira-yogikal and Madurai Sivaprakasas.

Sri La Sri Sivagnana Munivar and Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar of Nallur Jaffna were two colossuses who strode the Saiva world in the 18 & 19 centuries A.D. respectively.

They were all saintly persons of undisputable integrity. It is surprising that none of them were aware of this divergence of views and the disputes.

Later in the present century lived Scholars N. Kathiravetpillai. Maraimalali Adigal and Thiru V. Kalyanasundaranar who too were not aware of this alleged dispute, it is a canard.

Recently in 1988 Dharmapura Aadheenam of Tamilnadu has published a commemoration book "Aruvhai Samayam - Saiva Siddhantam oppeedu (ஆறுவகைச் சமயம் - சைவ சித்தாந்தம் ஒப்பீடு) is a comparative study of all religions including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Even this book has not mentioned anything about this dispute of the two schools of saiva Siddhantam referred to as above.

*Yoga Swamigal of Jaffna was not a monist. He sings thus :

"ஆன்மா அழியாதென்று
அன்றெனக்குச் சொன்னமொழி
நான் மறந்து போவேனோடி - கிளியே
நல்லூரான் தஞ்சமெடி."

"The Soul is indesructible and eternal. Then I was told of,
this truth
Thou Parrot! Do you think I would forget it?
Nalluran is my refuge".

It could be said with certainty that none of the Saiva's in Tamilnadu and Tamil Eelam are confused. These two countries are the bastions of Saivam and Saiva Siddhantam.

Similarly the Neocult of Shri Sathya Sai Baba of Prashanthi Nilayam Puttarpathi Andra Pradesh South India claims that Shri Sathya Sai baba is the incarnation (avathar) of God and his identity as such are the miracles performed by him.

This cult of late has gained credence amongst English educated expatriate Tamils of both sexes from Sri Lanka, now living in foreign countries and gainfully employed. They come from the traditional

*** Note :**

The Mystic the late Yogar Swamigal of Jaffna was said to be the spiritual guru of Sivaya Subramania Swamigal of Hawai U. S. A. "Nalluran" was Chellappa Swamigal the spitual Guru of Yogar Swamigal. Chellappa SWamigal of Kadait SWamigal santhanam lived by the Thermuddy - (தோமுட்டி) a high dais with a flight of steps used for mounting the Deity of the nallur Kanda Swamy Temple on to the Chariot.

Saiva Hindu families otherwise ignorant of Saiva religion and its philosophical system - Saiva Siddhantam which are their rich heritage, however wearing Vibuthy regularly.

Siva Peruman does not incarnate like mortals to face death and disease and the process of aging, it would limit His Absolutism and constrain His omnipotency, however with His omnipotency he could at any time, anywhere take instantly any human form or any other form. Miracles are marvels. They have a definite place and purpose in the Saiva religion. They occur as willed (sangarpam) by Sivaperuman and are caused by His Thiruvarud sakthi (Grace) for the benefit of His devotees and humanity in general. They are absolute.

The miracles associated with the Saivasaints Gnanasambander, Navukkarasar, Sundarar and Manicanvasagar and the rest of sixty three saints were marvels of great magnitude and consequence in the long history of the saiva religion, they were unimpeachable and not petty. Some of them have been enumerated here in their Glory.

For about three centuries beginning from the latter part of the 3rd century A.D. most part of the Saiva country, present Tamilnadu was under the rule of Kalapirars a tribal clan from the bordering Karnataka. They were fanatical Jains as much as their monks who guided them, ruled with an iron fist. All Saiva religions and cultural activities were banned, any violation was punished severely. This interregnum period was known as the "Dark Period" in the history of Tamilnadu.

Finally when the Kalapirar were routed in battle by the Pandyan Pallavakings, they withdrew from Tamilnadu leaving behind their Jain Monks most of whom were bigots without any scruples. The Jain monks had converted both the Pandya Pallava kings to Jainism.

The Jain Monks with the respective kings secured on their side let lose a reign of terror on the adherents of Saiva religion.

The distressed Queen Mangayatkkarasiyar and the chief Minister Kulasiraiyar who remained as ardent saivaites & devotees of Somassundara Peruman of the Maddurai Temple invited Gnanasambandar who was very young to Madura to save Saiva Religion and the people from the atrocities of the Jains. The saint visited Madura. The Jain Monks did their best to prevent the mission

of Ganasambandar. They tried to set fire to the MUTT where Ganasambandar stayed and they attempted to poison him. None by the Grace of Somasundara Peruman was successful.

The pandyan king fell seriously ill and Jain monks who were well versed in Medical and Tantric skills treated him, the illness became worse.

Gnanasambandar visited the king applied Viputhi ^and invoked the grace of Somasundara Peruman. Lo the Pandyan king recovered from his illness. The King was reconverted in to Saivism.

Gnanasambandar's invocation another miracle took place on the banks of river Vaikai at Madura for want of space it is not being elaborated here.

The irate Pandyn King executed the criminous Jain Monks on the spike. The Saiva religion was, re-established in its glory in the Pandyan King dom.

Gnanasambandar's wedding at Achalpuram Temple was another marvel. Immediately following the wedding he led his bride and the retinue who were witness to it into a Column of Jothi which appeared before them.

All of them, attained the sacred feet of Sivaperuman.

Navukkarasar was an erudite Jain Monk. His elder sister Thilkavathiar by her incessant prayers to the Lord of Thiruvathigai temple got him reconverted to Saiva religion, It was a miraculous event.

The infuriated criminous Jain Monks instigated the Pallava king who too was a Jain to commit various forms of torture fatal in Nature that could cause death.

Navukkarasar was secured to a rock and was thrown into the sea. The rock miraculously floated and brought the saint back alive unscathed to the safety of the shore.

Again Navukkarasar was entombed into a burning lime kiln. In this too he survived without in any way affected by the fire & heat.

Finally an elephant in musk was spurred to trample the saint, the elephant refused to act.

Navukkarasar's invocaton to Sivaperuman brought back to live the dead son of his disciple Apputhy Adigal. The Saint was invited for a meal at latters residence and the lad who had gone to the back garden to fetch plantain leaf was bitten by a venomous snake and was dead.

Several miracles were ascribed to Sañt Sundara the last of Thevara Trio. His invocation to the Lord of Avinase temple brought back to live a boy who was swallowed by a crocodile. When the time came for Sundarar to attain the feet of Sivaperuman, a white elephant descended from Mt. Kailas to bear him to the abode of Sivaperuman.

Sivaperuman (Somasundarar of Madurai temple) turned a pack of jackals into thorough bred Arab steeds to save his devotee Manicavasagar from punishment from the Pandyan King. Manicavasagar was given gold to buy Arab steeds for the King's cavalry. Instead of buying the horses at Thiruperumthurai he squandered the gold in the service of Sivaperuman. The Lord as an Arab riding a horse rode past the king, to deliver them. The miracle took place in the 3rd century.

Raja Rajan Cholan I the Great Chola Emperor was a saivite and a great devotee of Lord Natarajah of Chidambaram. His devotion earned him the epithet Sivapadasekaran. He built the Great Temple of Tanjore. His discovery of the full text of Thevara Hymns was a marvel and miracle of great consequence.

The above mentioned miracles were marvels. They were materialized from Sutha Mayai consistent with the doctrine of Saivasiddhantam.

One of the basic principles of saiva Siddhantam is satkaria vadam which is both rational and scientific.

Mayai is a reality

It is the material cause of the entire universe including our body.

As stated earlier something cannot come of nothing or become nothing.

All persons brought to live by the aforementioned miracles lived a full and normal life.

On the other hand the alleged miracles of Satya Sai Baba and similar spiritual men are petite producing mini Sivalingam, Viputhi valuable jewellery items and wrist watches according to the social status and

rank of his devotes. They are said to be just produced from nothing by the wave of his hand they come from nowhere. It is most unscientific and irrational and in reality not possible.

These prompted the rationalists to allege that the said miracles of Shri Satya Sai Baba savours of jugglery. Besides Shri Satya Sai Baba there are others who are performing similar feats. To be precise the same ones.

Swami Premananda of Matale Sri Lanka at present languishing in a jail in India on charges of murder and rape is one of them. He is running an ashram close to Trichinopoly. Further there are few others who are doing this without any pretence of spiritualism.* Similarly lay preachers from the west of the Jehova cult of Christianity following their prayer meetings claim to cure incurable persons born dumb to speak and born deaf to hear and cripple to walk. Shri Satya Sai Baba's cult has no epistemological basis similar to Saiva Siddhantam or Vedantam, which is essential for a religious system.

It is relevant to quote the following lines from the Sivapuranam Thiruvagasam of saint Manikavasagar.

"ஆக்கம் அளவிறதி யில்லாய் அனைத்துலகம்
ஆக்குவாய் காப்பாய் அழிப்பாய் அருள் தருவாய்
போக்குவாய் என்னைப் புகுவிப்பாய் நிந்தொழும்பின்
நாற்றத்தின் நேரியாய்."

*** Note :**

Vide Virakesari Illustrated weekly of 1.2.1998 page 3 Shri Premamanda of India a member of the research Organisation of Nationalists.

He claims 1500 feats of jugglery and challenged all others who are indulging in similar feats.

Premananda is from India he is a rationalist and a layman without any spiritual pretensions. He is the organiser of a rational society and a research organisation engaged in the studies of happenings which are outside the reclaim of nature.

Premamanda claims that he could perform about 1500 feats with the help of magic and dexterity, more than what the spiritual persons could do. He has issued a challenge to them.

Vide Virekesari Illustrated weekly of 1.2.98 Colombo.

"Not subject to creation, timeless and eternal
 You create the entire universe, You, Sustain it
 You destroy it, You bestow your Grace
 You push me into the cycle of births and deaths
 You are subtle like the fragrance
 You involve me into your service."

Celestials (Devas) Munivars and Siththars who are by no means godly by their severe penance and austerities acquires certain Siththis (supernatural powers) which were in no way absolute to gain powers over others and personal gains but these powers are at Nought against devotees of Sivaperuman and sacred places like the city of Chidambaram. Saint Manikavasagar highlights this in the following lines of the Thiruvagasam Hymn.

"வாழ்து வதும் வானவர்கள் தாம்வாழ்வான் மனம் நிற்பால்
 தாழ்துவதும் தாம் உயர்ந்து தம்மை யெல்லாந்
 தொழ வேண்டிச்....."

(அறிவுறுத்தல் 16 திருவாசகம்)

Saint Thayumanunivar, a Saiva saint who lived in or about the 17 century AD at Thiruchirapally in the present Tamilnadu referring to the aforementioned siddhis (சித்தி) sings thus in his "Thejo Mayananthe Hymn No. 8 (தேஜோ மயானந்த பாடல்) :

"கந்துக மதகரியை வசமா நடத்தலாம்
 கரடிவெம் புலிவாயையும்
 கட்டலாம் ஒருசிங்கம் முதுகின் மேல் கொள்ளலாம்
 கட்செவி எடுத்து ஆட்டலாம்
 வெந்தழலின் இரதம்வைத்து ஐந்துலோகத்தையும்
 வேதித்து விற்று உண்ணலாம்
 வேறு ஒருவர் காணாமல் உலகத்து உலாவலாம்
 விண்ணவரை ஏவல் கொள்ளலாம்"

*** Note :**

The Disc in the hand of Lord Vishnu is an all powerful deadly weapon of destruction. It was ineffective against Thatheesi Munivar a great devotee of Sivaperuman. In the clash Maha Vishnu had with Thatheesi Munivar the disc got blunted and was dead beyond resurrection. Maha Vishnu had to do penance offering one thousand Lotus flowers to the feet of Sivaperuman to get a new Disc, one flower coming short-he offered his eye-vide. (திருத்தோணோக்கம், 10வது திருவாசகம்) Thiruththonakam 10th Hymn of Saint Manicavasagar.

சந்தழும் இளமையொடு இருக்கலாம், மற்று ஒரு
 சரீரத்தினும் புகுதலாம்
 ஜலம் மேல் நடக்கலாம் கனல்மேல் இருக்கலாம்
 தன்னிகர் இல் சித்திபெறலாம்
 சிந்தையை அடக்கியே சும்மா இருக்கின்ற
 திறம் அரிது சத்துஆகிஎன்
 சித்தமிசை குடிகொண்ட அறிவு ஆன தெய்வமே
 தேஜோ மயானந்தமே."

One could tame elephants running amok in musk. Muzzle wild bears and vicious tigers. Ride lions, catch venomous snakes and make them to dance, convert by Alechemy the five base metals into gold and sell it to make a living, it is called transmutations, invisibly roam all over the world unseen by others, get celestals to serve you.

Be eternally young, transmigrate into other bodies, walk on water, sit on burning coal and acquire unrivalled siddhis. But to control your fleeting thoughts.

Stillness in Meditation is a very rare possibility, Oh Lord you dwell in me as absolute knowledge and bliss. A devotee who practices Yoga should be cautious. In the course of his spiritual exercise he might acquire some siddhis. How ever he should not indulge in exhibiting or exulting over them, this would digress him from his path to salvation and could make him to assume that he is Brahman and cause a virtual set back in his spiritual progress. He would slip down from Grace into the slough of samsara, consequently he would also lose the siddhis.

Finally Viputhy is considered to be the holiest symbol of the Saiva Hindus of all sects, all the four Saiva Nayamars have sung its Glory in unequal terms, they had visions of Sivaperuman with His Golden complexion turned milk white by the smearing of Viputhy on His anthropomorphic body (உருவத்திருமேனி). This is referred to in several places in there Hymns.

One of the feats of Shri Satiya Sai Baba is producing Viputhy from nowhere.

Note :

Duruvasa Munivar's curse on the sacred city of Chidambaram did not materialize for details vide page 54.

How is it that Shri Satiya Sai Baba's forehead always looks blank without Vibuthy.

In this context it is relevant to mention here the "Hymn from Achappathu of Thiruvvasagam of saint Manicavasagar.

"பிணியெலாம் வரினும் அஞ்சேன்
பிறப்பினோ டிறப்பும் அஞ்சேன்
துணிநிலா அளியினான்றன்
தொழும்பரோ டழுந்தி அம்மால்
திணிநிலாம் பிளந்துங் காணாச்
சேவடி பரவி வெண்ணீ
றணிகிலா தவரைக் கண்டால்
அம்ம நாம் அஞ்சுமாறே."

"I fear not pestelence

I am not afraid of the cycle of birth and deaths.

I am aghast in horror to behold those

Who do not apply vibuthy which is white

and adore the sacred feet of Sivaperuman

who carries the crescent moon on His head

The sacred feet that Maha Vishnu

Of the galaxy of devotees who

Split the core of the earth

In vain to behold them."

There are two more cults Anjaneyar (Hanuman) and Iyappan that are trying to creep into the saiva fold of late, they have no Siva Agamic Sanction or Puranic evidence and as such considered as heterodox cults ----- to the saiva religion after all the hindus in Sri Lanka are all saivaites

For clarity, in some of cases, I have introduced quotations more than once.

I have also in some cases, presented concepts out of chronological order. In a treatise of this nature such lapses are unavoidable.

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உ

சிவ சிவ

கேதீச்சரப் பெருமான் துணை

திருவாக்குஞ் செய்கருமம் கைகூட்டும் செஞ்சொற்
பெருவாக்கும் பீடும் பெருக்கும் - உருவாக்கும்
ஆதலால் வானோரும் ஆனை முகத்தானைக்
காதலாற், கூப்புவர் தம்கை.

CHAPTER - 1

The culmination of the vedas according to brahmana vaidikas is the vedantam.

The well known *samaya achariar* (preceptor) of this system of Hindu Religion is Adi Sankarar. It is called Kevala advaita. He lived in the 8th century A.D. in South India.

The means of reaching Brahman is "knowledge" as sruti has it - "tam evam vidvan amrta iha bhavati. Nan yah pantha ayanaya vidyate" - it is by knowing HIM that (one) becomes immortal here, there is no other path for going (to HIM)*

Umapathy Sivachariar the last of the four Meikanda Santhanam Sainly lineage (Saiva Siddhanta preceptors) called it mayavatham.

His predecessor Arunandi Sivachariar categorized it in his treatise, Sivagnana Siddhiar as pura samayam.

The religions and philosophies of India are generally divided by Saiva Siddhanta preceptors into two main classes, the orthodox or inner group (அகச்சமயம்) and the heterodox or outer group (புறச்சமயம்)

Saiva Siddhantam posits thirty six thatthuvass (தத்துவங்கள் - tools) Vedanta posits twenty eight thatthuvass**

Note :

* Vide p. 106, History of the Tamils from the earliest times to 600 A. D. by P. T. Sreenivasa Iyengar.

** Vide Hymns 2172 and 2179 of Thirumanthiram by Thirumular.

"நாலா றுடன்புருட னற்றத்துவமுடன்
வேறான ஐயைந்து மெய்ப்புரு டன்பரங்
சுறா வியோமம் பரமெனக் கொண்டனன்
வேறான நாலேழு வேதாந்த தத்வமே."

"ஆகின்ற தொண்ணூறோ டாறும் பொதுஎன்பர்
ஆகின்ற வாறா றருஞ்சைவர் தத்துவம்
ஆகின்ற நாலேழ் வேதாந்தி வயிணவர்க்
காகின்ற நாலாறை யைந்துமாயா வாதிக்கே."

The said thirty six (36) thathuvas (tools) are unique to Saiva Siddhantam. No other religious system features them.

"முப்பதும் ஆறும் படிமுத்தி ஏணியாய்
ஒப்பிலா ஆனந்தத்து உள்ஒளி புக்குச்
செப்பரிய சிவம் சிவம் கண்டு தான் தெளிந்து
அப்பரிசு ஆக அமர்ந்திருந்தாரே."

(திருமுலர் திருமந்திரம் - 126)

The thirty six thathuvas (Tools) are rungs of the ladder that leads one to Para Muththi (Moksha) in comparable bliss enlightenment illuminates your innerself. You perceive the indescribable Sivam realizing you are always seated with him receiving it as your priceless price.

The thirty six Thathuvas have evolved from the Mayai. It consists of three parts :-

- 1) Spiritual or pure (சுத்தம்)
- 2) Mundane - Impure (அசுத்தம்)
- 3) Admixture of pure and impure - suddha suddha (சுத்தாசுத்தம்)

Pure - (5)

- (1) Sivam (2) Sakthi (3) Sathakkiam (4) Easwaram and
(5) Sudden Viddhai.

Impure - (24)

Known as Pirakirithimayai and are twenty four in number.

(6) Earth (7) Water (8) Air (9) Space and (10) Fire. These are called five Bhoothas. (11) Smell (12) Palate (13) Light (14) Touch (15) Sound. These are called Thammathirais (16) Ears (17) Skin (18) Eyes (19) Tongue (20) Nose. These are known as Gnanainthiriangal. (21) Mouth (22) Legs (23) Hands (24) Anus (25) Sex Organ. These are Kanmenthiriums.

(26.1) Manam (26.2) Siththam (27) Budhi (28) Angaram. These are the Anthakaranas (Internal tools) (29) Guna.

Admixture

(30) Time (காலம்) (31) Niathi (32) Kalai (33) Viddhai (34) Aragam (35) Purushan (36) Mayai.

Vedanta Thathuvas are as follows :

- (1) 5 Elements (Bhoothas)
- (2) 5 Sense Organs-Ears, Eyes, Skin, Tongue, Nose.
- (3) 5 Functions of the Sense Organs - Sound, Touch, Sight, Palate, Smell.
- (4) 10 Organs of the Body - Mouth, Legs, Hands. Excretory, Genital Organs and their respective functions.
- (5) Jeevathma, Brahman, and Greater Space (பரமபகாயம்) which is beyond conception.

The Vedanta declares the existence of a single soul only Brahman; Saiva Siddhantam declares the plurality of souls beside Pati (Lord.)

Vedanta interprets the Maha Vakya in such way to deny the reality of the Pasu concept of Saiva Siddhantam.

When the Vedas declare the existence of one soul (Brahman) the Saiva Siddhantam replies that the Pathi (Lord) of souls is one; not that there is only one soul. Vedas do not deny the plurality of souls.

"So far as the distinctive contribution of Saiva Siddhanta to Hindu thought is concerned, we may mention Siddhantam's happy use of the term "ADVAITA". Advaita means for him not mere non

difference as it does for the Kevala Advaitin but aunion, in separateness - (Vide page 304 "Saiva Siddhanta" by V. A. Devasenapathy, M. A., P. Hd., Professor of Philosophy by Madras University 1974.) This Union is permanent and eternal with no return to the painful cycle of births and deaths.

A person with love and devotion serenely (Sathuviga state of the inner senses) and steadfastly practises Sariai (சரியை) or Kiriai (கிரியை) or Yogam (யோகம்) the three paths that lead the Athma to the Lotus Feet of Sivaperuman, by His grace attains the state of Iruvinai Oppu (இருவினை ஒப்பு) - absolute detachment both in pleasure and in pain, this is followed by ripening of the Karma (மலபரிபாகம்) then the Thiruvarul sakthi which was hitherto remained as Tirothana Sakthi settles in the Athma. At this stage Sivaperuman out of his love for the Athma appears as Preceptor (Guru) in human form and performs Dikshai to the said Athma, the Athma is inducted by Sivaperuman into the non-dual union. This takes place only in the instance of Athmas who were Sakalar subject to all the three Malas. In the case of Vingnanakalar who is subject to only Anavamalam, Sivaperuman resides within the athma and enlightens it, thus the Anavam loses its force and in the case of Pralaya Kalar subject to two Malas, Anavam and Mayai, Sivaperuman manifests as Sri Kandar with - four hands, three eyes and Neelakantham (throat blued with the swallowing of Snake venom,) and performs Dikshai. Saiva Siddhantam, mentions a world of words (சொல்லுகம்) besides the material universe. These words are derived from Sudha Maya. Words (பதம்) are made up of letters (வண்ணம்). These words conjunct with Sound become Speech, the Speech we hear through our ears, words our indicative of objects and the means of Athma's knowledge, there are four categories of Speech-Vaikari, Sukkumai, Paisanthe and Mathimai (வைகரி, சூக்குமவைகரி, பைசந்திரிவைகரி, மத்திமைவைகரி). All the Manthirams are based on them in the Sivaperu State the Athma knows everything directly without the means of words or speech.

In the aforementioned dual union all the three categories of Athmas on their release experience Sivaperuman who is Sat-Chit - Ananda - Sivaperuman's Sorupanilai (சொருபநிலை) - transcendal state.

Thus dual Union is called Sivaperu - (சிவப்பேறு) absolute Mukthi in this State Thiruvavur Sakthi leaves the Athma and the Athma forgets the Thiruvavur Sakthi. It is difficult to achieve this. (The following verses from Thugal Aru Potham" துகளறு போதம் - ஆசிரியர் சீர்காழிச்சிற்றம்பல நாடிகள் Illummates it :

"எல்லாங்கழன்ற விடமே சிவமென்று
சொல்லாடுமுன்னே சுருதிமறை - நல்லாய்கேள்
நின்றபடிதானே நிலையா நிலையதனில்
நின்றுவிடு நேராநீ."

Brahman is eternally immaculate, Omniscient. Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Transcendent. Why should he don the shackle of the Mayai and subjects himself to it's painful cycle of births and deaths and the frailties of the human body-ignorance, confusion forgetfulness etc. This could not be possibly called play or sport of the Divinity by any stretch of imagination; this big question is posed by Umapathy Sivachariar of the Meikandan Lineage, he calls Mayavadam (Vedantam) - in Mayawatha Sangatpa Nirakaranam Part 4)

CHAPTER - 2

Sri Kantar also known as Thiru Neelakanta Sivachariar has written a commentary (Bhashiyam) like Sankarar on the Vedanta Sutras in the light of the upanishadas and the siva agamas.

Sri Kantar was contemporary of Sankarar, but senior to Sankarar. Sri Kantar's bhashyam was earlier to that of Sankarar.

Sri Kantar, though eminent as Sankarar, was a recluse, leading a life of sanctity and devotion and imbuing the minds of such disciples as were drawn to him by his sanctity and holy way.

Appaiya Thikshitar has written a commentary on the bhashiyam of Sri Kantar. Appaiya Thikshitar was the guru and mentor of the great King Krishna Thevarayar. He was saintly and a devotee of Lord Siva. He has sung one hundred slokams in Sanskrit in praise of Lord Siva.

Sri Kantar's Vedantam known as* Sivaadvaitam has much in common with Saiva Siddhantham or Suththa advaitam. It is placed a step below Saiva Siddhantham.

It is counted as one of the six orthodox religions (அகச் சமயங்கள்) while Sankara's kevala advaitam is placed in the heterodox group.

Sri Kantar holds that both the living and material universe is not different from Sivaperuman.

Note :

*Siva Advaitam recognises the intelligent and the inert only and contends that is not consistent with reason to affirm the existence of Souls as different from Siva and the Universe-Page 220 Saiva Siddhanta by V. A. Devasenapathy, M.A., P.Hd., Professor of Philosophy University of Madras.

The athma is incapable of knowing and Sivaperuman is the knower of everything. (உயிருக்கு என்றும் அறியும் தன்மை இல்லை. சிவமே அனைத்தையும் அறியும்).

The athma that attains mukthi becomes absolutely one with Sivaperuman unlike in the Suththa advaitham.

Siva advaitham postulates parinamavadam, (பரிணாமவாதம்) transformation theory, ascribing change to the chit sakthi of Sivaperuman.

Nilakanta Vijayam, describes the meeting of Sankarar and Sri Kantar. Under Sri Kantar's influence Sankarar is said to have composed the Soundarya Lahari and other devotional works promoting bakthi. In one of these works he refers in most adoring terms to the great Thirugnanasambanthar and speaks of him as the dravida sisu (child) Thirugnanasambandar, it must be remembered was a brahmin.

In Sivananda lahiri, Sankarar refers to Saint Kannappar the Veddah Saint and says, "Foot wear used in paths becomes a bunch of holy grass to the person of Pasupathi. Washing-by spiting a mouthful of water a holybath, the remnants of half eaten flesh (as Neivethiam) a fresh oblation and a woodman the greatest of Bhaktas. What is there impossible for Bhakthi?" *

In "Siva Poosankam" Sankarar refers reverently to the unworldly deeds of the Saiva Saints Iyatpakayar, Siruthondar, and Sandeesar and says "Oh Lord of the Mountain Thou didst show Thy Holy Presence before those who wronged a wife, a son and a father respectively. I am incapable of harming anybody. I do not know how Thou wouldst do any favour to me".*

Note :

- 1) The Elements of Saiva Siddhantham
- by Thiru A. Viswanathan of Jaffna
- 2) ARUVAGAI SAMAYAM, SAIVA SIDDHANTHA OPPIDU
-DHARMA PURA ADEENAM 1988 - அறுவகைச் சமயம்
சைவசித்தாந்த ஒப்பீடு - தருமை ஆதீனம் 1988

Note :

* Note the use of the term "PASUPATHI"

* The Elements of Saiva Siddhantham Thiru. A Viswantha Pillai.

The Culmination of the Siva Agamas is Bhakti as the means of attaining "Mukthi" deliverance of the Athma (soul) to be one with Lord Siva at His Sacred Feet. It is through incessant devotion and love of Sivaperuman one could attain Mukthi. How this devotion and love could be fostered is thus described by Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar in his Saiva Vinavidai :

"பசுக்களாகிய நம்முடைய இலக்கணங்களையும் பசுபதியாகிய சிவபெருமானுடைய இலக்கணங்களையும், எத்துணையும் பெரிய சிவபெருமான் எத்துணையும் சிறிய நமக்கெல்லாம் இரங்கி எளிவந்து ஓயாது என்றும் உபகரிக்கும் பெரும் கருணையும் இவ்வியல்பின் அனந்த கோடியில் ஒரு கூறாயினும் உடையவர் பிறர் ஒருவரும் நமக்கு இல்லாமையையும் இடையறாது சிந்திக்க சிந்திக்க நமக்கு அச் சிவபெருமானிடத்தில் அன்பு விளையும்."

"அவன் அருளாலே அவன் தாள் வணங்கிச் சிந்தை மகிழ்ச் சிவபுராணந்தன்னை முந்தை வினை முழுதும் ஓய உரைப்பவன் யான்" Sivapuram, Thiruvagam of Saint Manickavasagar.

An easy way to keep up this constant thought of the Lord consists in meditating on HIS Name - namasivaya in five letters (நமசிவாய) and singing the sacred songs of thevaram, thiruvagam, thiruvisaipa, thirupallandu and periyapuram.

The Lord's thiruvarul (grace) is necessary to attain mukthi.

The Siva agamas prescribe four margas or paths for the attainment of mukthi. They are sariyai, kiriya, yogam & gnanam. They are explained in beautiful and easy language by Kadavul Maamunivar in his thiruvathavur adigal puram ; thus it says :

"ஆவலால் எமக்கு ஆம் மலர் மரங்கள்
ஆக்கல், அம்மலர் பறித்தல், அம்மலரால்
தாலிலாவகை தார்பல சமைத்தல்
தண்ப்பில் எம்புகழ் சாற்றல், அன்புடன் நாம்
மேவும் ஆலயம் அலகிடல், மெழுகிடல்
விளங்க நல்விளக்கு இடுதல், எம் அடியார்க்கு
ஏவல் ஆனவை செய்தல், இச்சரியை
இயற்ற வல்லவர்க்கு எம் உலகு அளிப்போம்."

"Laying flower beds and planting flower trees,
Gathering their flowers and making garlands of various
kinds for Us,

Chanting our praises, cleaning and paving with water and
 cowdung our temples
 And lighting them and the serving of our devotees
 These form sariyai and those who perform it with religious
 fervour,
 We admit to Our Kingdom".

Saint Navukkarasar adopted this path - dhasa markam, sings thus :

"நிலைபெறுமா நெண்ணுதியேல் நெஞ்சே நீ வா
 நித்தலுமெம் பிரானுடைய கோயில் புக்குப்
 புலர்வதன்முன் அலகிட்டு மெழுக்கும் இட்டுப்
 பூமாலை புனைந்தேத்திப் புகழ்ந்து பாடித்
 தலையாரக் கும்பிட்டுக் கூத்தும் ஆடிச்
 சங்கரா சயபோற்றி போற்றி என்றும்
 அலைபுனல்சேர் செஞ்சடையெம் ஆதீயென்றும்
 ஆருரா என்றென்றே அலறாநில்லே."

"Thee my heart come hither!
 Unceasingly think of HIM Our Lord
 Before dawn enter the portals of HIS Temple
 Sweep and pave the floor with water and cowdung
 Weave garlands of fresh picked fragrant flowers
 Adorn HIM with them, sing hymns in HIS praise
 Dance in ecstasy. Cry loud in Supplication
 Uttering Sankara victory attend THEE
 Ancient with flame like matted hair coiled like crown
 Carrying the Holy River Ganga with Waves
 And wail "Aroora The eternal."

"கந்த வார்க்கமும் கிளர் மணப் புகையும்
 கவின் கொள் தீபமும் புனித மஞ்சனமும்
 கொந்து அவிழ்ந்த நல் மலரும் மற்று உளவும்
 கொண்டு, மாயையின் குணங்கள் ஒன்று இலராய்,
 ஐந்து சுத்தி செய்து, அகம் புறம் இறைஞ்சி
 அங்கியின் கடன் கழித்து அருள் வழி நின்று
 இந்த நல் பெரும் கிரியை அன்புடனே
 இயற்ற வல்லவர் எம் அருகு இருப்பர்".

"Gathering sweet smelling substances,
 thupam (incense fume) theepam (lamp)
 Bathing with fragrant holy water and rosewater

Offering freshly blossomed flowers and others accessories
 With pure mind, performing the fivefold purifications
 And worshipping as internally
 And externally and performing the sacred fire rites without
 ego,
 Those who thus perform Kiriya as prescribed in the agamas
 With true devotion sit by our side."

Saint Gnana Sambanthar propitiated this path. His relationship with the Lord was of a good son and father - sat putra margam.

Saint Sundarar followed the yoga margam or path. His absolute devotion love and absorption was demonstrated when he visited Nataraja temple of Chidambaram and saw the Lord. Saint Sekkilar in the following verse of his Periapuranam vividly described the condition of Saint Sundarar :

"ஐந்து பேர் அறிவும் கண்களே கொள்ள அளப்பரும்
 கரணங்கள் நான்கும்,
 சிந்தையே ஆகக் குணம்ஒரு முன்றும் திருந்து சாத்துவிகமே
 ஆக,
 இந்துவாழ் சடையான் ஆடும் ஆனந்த எல்லையில் தனிப்
 பெருங் கூத்தின்,
 வந்தபேர் இன்ப வெள்ளத்துள் திளைத்து மாறிலா
 மகிழ்ச்சியின் மலர்ந்தார்."

"All the physical senses were merged in the eyes
 All the inner senses numbering four were in the thought.
 All the three gunas were merged in the Sathviga one
 When saint Sunderar beheld
 The great and unique devinely and joyous dance of the
 Lord
 With the luxuriant Lock with the moon on it
 Sundarar plunged into boundless bliss and joy."

The following are Lines from Sunderar's Thevara Hymns :

"எத்தான் மறவாதே நினைக்கின்றேன் மனத்துன்னை."

in the first hymn

"O Lord I am incesantly thinking of you in my mind without
 any lapse."

'மற்றுப்பற்றெனக்கின்றி நின்றிருப்பாதமே மனம் பாவித்தேன்."

"O Lord my mind is set on Your Sacred feet with absolute detachment."

They are expressive of his inner spiritual experience - Yogic State.

Saint Sundarar's relationship was that of a good friend - saka margam. The Lord was never out of the mind of Saint Sundarar :

"பரந்த வான்கலை முழுதும் ஆகமநூல்
பகுதியும் பல சமய சாத்திரமும்
தெரிந்து தேர்ந்து அதில் வாய்ந்த முப்பொருளின்
செய்தியே பொருள் என மனம் தெளிந்து,
புரிந்து போந்து உள சிற்றறிவு அனைத்தும்
போக்கி, அவ்வறிவு எனச் சிவபோதம்
விரிந்து தோன்றும் நெஞ்சு உடைய வித்தகரே
மேன்மை ஆன நம் மெய்ப் பதம் பெறுவார்."

"Learning the expansive arts and sciences,
The agamas and other religious books and shastras
And rating them at their worth,
After mature consideration realising the truth of the
tripatharthas.
And getting rid of egoistic knowledge
Which is trivial and attaining sivananam,
Such is gnana sadans
And those blessed souls who thus realize sivananam
attain Our sacred feet."

The former three are each absolute and finally the aspirants attain sivananam and the feet of the Lord in this case.

Saint Manickavasagar followed the gnana margam or path. His relationship with the Lord was of a guru and disciple.

Lord Siva manifesting as a gnanachariar soujourned at Thiruperumthurai seated under the shade of a salubrious kuruntha tree was giving discourses on Siva agamas to a group of alleged disciples who were really His Ganas. Saint Manickavasagar who had

gone to Thiruperumthurai to buy steeds from the Arab traders for the Pandyan King saw this scene of the Gnanachariar and His disciples, went close to them and was watching them. The Lord cast His blissful eyes on Manickavasagar and thus initiated him. It is called nayana theekai.. Manickavasagar was the Chief Minister of the Pandyan King. He fell at the feet of the Lord and from that moment he renounced every thing including the chief Ministership.

Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar the Saiva Savant has explained tensely and explicitly the said four paths in the following words :

"சைவ சமயத்தை அடைந்தவர் சிவபெருமானுடைய திருவடியைச் சேர்த்தற்குரிய மார்க்கம் சரியை, கிரியை, யோகம், ஞானம் என நான்கு வகைப்படும். அவைகளுள்ளே சரியையாவது புறத்தொழிலினாலே உருவத்திருமேனியை நோக்கிச் செய்யும் வழிபாடு. கிரியையாவது புறத்தொழில், அகத்தொழில் எனும் இரண்டினாலும் அருவருவத் திருமேனியை நோக்கிச் செய்யும் வழிபாடு. யோகமாவது அகத் தொழிலினாலே அருவத் திருமேனியை நோக்கிச் செய்யும் வழிபாடு. ஞானமாவது புறத்தொழில் அகத்தொழில் என்னும் இரண்டுமில்லாமல் அறிவுத் தொழில் மாத்திரத்தினாலே அம்முன்று திருமேனிக்கும் மேலாய் அகண்டாகர நித்த வியாபக சச்சிதானந்தப் பிளம்பாய் நிறைந்து நிற்கின்ற சிவத்தினிடத்தே செய்யும் வழிபாடு."

(Vide page 80 second para of Arumuga Navalar Charithiram by V. Kanagaratna Upathiar 23.8.1990)

"Those who are Saivaites who ultimately seek the Lotus Feet of Sivaperuman follow the four paths Sariai, Kiriai, Yogam and Gnanam.

Sariai is said to be physical service to Sivaperuman's Anthromorphic Forms. Kiriai is the worship of the Lord as Sivalingam - formless form both physically and spiritually.

"Yogam, is the spiritual worship of Sivaperuman in His formless aspect Gnanam, is the worship of Sivaperuman with the true knowledge attained by His Grace, His* Satchitananda aspect. It transcends all the earlier three aspects - Anthromorphic, Sivalingam and Formless state. Sat chit Ananda aspect is It's true state (Sorupa

Note :

*Somaskander Icon represents the SATCHITANANDA STATE.

Nilai) blissful, indefinite, expansive boundless eternal and omnipresent. It is as Jothi. It is It's True state as a reality transcending everything (Sorupa Nilai)

The four aforementioned Saints are the samaya Kuravar (preceptors) of the Suththa advaita Siddhanta Saivaism Saivaite Hinduism.

"சொற்கோவும் தோணிபுரத்
தோன்றலும் எம் சுந்தரனும்
சிற்கோல வாதவூர் தேசிகனும்
முற்கோலி வந்திலரேல்
நீறு எங்கே மாமறை நூல்தான் எங்கே
எந்தை பிரான் ஐந்தெழுத் தெங்கே."

Thus sang Saiva Velappa Navalar of the 19th century A. D. extolling the important role of the four saints :

"King of words , the son of Thonipuram Our Sundarar
Vathavurar embodiment of gnanam not born in time
Where would be the holy ashes
Which would be the vedas
Where would be the five letters of my Lord."

Bakthi is the bed rock of the Suththa Advaita Siddhanta Saivaism (Savaite Hinduism).

The Sacret hymns of the four samaya kuravar and other beatified saints of Saivaite Hinduism, divided into twelve cantos are all soul stirring outpourings of their boundless Bakthi, constant singing of them with piety and devotion would imbibe bakthi. Regular temple worship and meditation on the Panchaksharam (five letters) are also necessary to attain the final deliverance of the athma (soul).

The bakthi of saint Kannappar was unique and incomparable beyond description.

Kannappan was a hunter (வேடன்) lad born of the forest, unsophisticated and illiterate. He was the son and successor of the Kalahasti forest tribal hunter chief.

Kannappan went on his maiden hunting escapade with his comrades and roamed the forest of Kalahasti hunting wild animals.

In the midst of the jungle he beheld a lonely Sivalingam. - Lord Kudumi Thevar. Kannappan was like a cow with its newly born calf refusing to lose sight of Him - The Lord.

"கற்றாவின் மனம் போலக் கசிந்துருக"

- *Thirupulampal Thiruvagasam.*

In his ecstacy Kannappan embraced the Lord to his bosom. His heart sank to think that the Lord was alone in a lonely forest in the midst of wild beasts without any one to protect or give Him food. Day and night passed. He ate not, he slept not and watched the Lord.

Kannappan completely lost his ego -all sense of his "self" - "I" and the world around him, thought of nothing except the Lord, for all intent and purpose the world had ceased to exist, he fully abnegated himself, what is more he could not feel the pain when he scooped his eye to implant on the Lord's bleeding eye.

The sublimity of the bakthi of Kannappan was demonstrated to the world by the following endearing words of Kudumi Thevar, the Lord of Kalahasti when Kannappan had placed the sharp point of the arrow to scoop his second eye to implant on the other bleeding eye of the Lord, He (the Lord) pounced and held back firmly the hands of Kannappan and appealingly spoke to him as follows to stop the said scooping :

"நில்லு கண்ணப்ப! நில்லு கண்ணப்ப!

என் அன்புடைத் தோன்றல் நில்லு கண்ணப்ப!" *

Saint Manicavasagar in thirukoththumbi Hymn 218 lauds in unequalled terms - Kannappan's bakthi:

"கண்ணப்பன் ஒப்பது ஓர் அன்பு இன்மை

- கண்டபின் என்னப்பன் என் ஒப்பில் என்னையும்

ஆட்கொண்டருளி...."

"After finding that there was no one to equal Kannappan in Bakthi, my Father enslaved me too knowing that I was the most undeserving, not comparable in any way".

Note :

* Vide Thirumaram of Thirukannappa Thevar - Saint Nakkeerar. 11th Thirumurai.

Kannappan bade his comrades to return to their homes and remained behind to guard the Lord Whom, he thought was alone in the forest and on the following morning he saw a Saintly Sivachariar (priest) performing pposanai in the conventional agamic way with holy water (தீர்த்தம்) in a copper vessel, flowers. Naivethiam (cooked rice in honey and ghee) and offering obeisance with thupa (incense) and theepam (lamp) following it, Kannappan used his mouth as Kalasam and brought holywater and spat on Kudumi Thevar as abishekam (holy bathing) and offered roasted choice pork as naivethiam, the Lord relished it as much as He relished the former. Later as upasaram Kannapapan placed his sandalled foot on Lord's Face to the joy of the Lord.

"பொருட்பற்றிச் செய்கின்ற பூசனைகள் போல் விளங்கச்
செருப்புற்ற சீரடி வாய்க்கலசம் ஊனமுதம்
விருப்புற்று வேடனார் சேடறிய மெய்குளிர்ந்தங்
கருட்பெற்று நின்றவா தோணோக்கம் ஆடாமோ."

-Thiruvasagam - Thiruthonokkam Saint Manickavasagar.

Kannapans's sacrifice of his eye was supreme and spontaneous, absolutely selfless not expecting anything in return.

In contrast the prayers and austere penance by the celestial minor deities - Mahavishnu, Brahma, Indran and host of others and the munivars of the vedic age are not by any account selfless, it was always done with motive to gain power and long celestial life to indulge in its unlimited pleasures, after all they are all Anu (soul) vargam (species).

Lord Vishnu to retrieve his prestigious weapon, the disc (சக்கரம்) did penance to Lord Siva. He offered 1008 lotus flowers. One of them, coming short, offered his eye in its place. Probably referring to this and to those of others Saint Manickavasagar in his aruvuruthal thiruchathakam sings thus ;

'வாழ்த்துவதும் வானவர்கள் தாம் வாழ்வான் மனம் நிற்பால்
தாழ்த்துவதுந் தாம் உயர்ந்து தம்மையெல்லாந் தொழ
வேண்டி."

Hence it is futile in worshipping them.

It is relevant to quote the thirupallandu here :

"சொல்லாண்ட சுருதிப் பொருள் சோதித்த
தூய்மனத் தெண்டருள்ளீர்
சில்லாண்டிற் சிதையுஞ் சிலதேவர்
சிறுநெறி சேராமே
வில்லாண்ட கனகத் திரண்மேரு
விடங்கன் விடைப்பாகன்
பல்லாண்டென்னும் பதங்கடந் தானுக்கே
பல்லாண்டு கூறுதுமே."

-Senthanar - Ninth thirumurai

"You holy devotees who were well versed in the Vedas
To Keep away from the cult of petty deities
Who perish while, sing in praise of the Lord
Bearing a bow & arrow
Residing in the golden Mt. Meru and rides the bull,
He is eternal transcending all time factor
Wish HIM many years."

One would wonder how Kannappan an illiterate hunter and dweller of the forest killing animals unacquainted with the shastras and religion attained such high state of Godliness and mukthi without the preliminary stages of spirituality. Arunandi Sivachariar in his preface verse to Sivagnana siddhar gives the answer as follows :

"பண்டைநற் றவத்தால் தோன்றிப் பரமனைப் பத்தி பண்ணுந்
தொண்டரைத் தானே தூய கதியினில் தொகுப்பன்."

"Holy virtuous and pious devotees
Consequent to their bakthi in the previous births to God
Would be given mukthi direct by HIM
Even though they had no knowledge of the shastras."

The Sangam poet and Saint Nakkirar in the undermentioned verse states that there is no one equal to Arjuna, the Mahabharata hero in thapas (penance) and impliedly alludes that Arjuna was born as Kannappan privileged to embrace the sacred body of Lord Kudimi Thevar of Kalahasti :

"வாமான்னேதர் வல்ல வயப்போர் விசயனைப் போல்
ஆர்தாம் உலகில் தவமுடையார் - தாம் ஆர்க்கும்
காண்டற்கு அரியராய்க் காளத்தி ஆழ்வானைத்
தீண்டாத்தான் பெற்றமையாற் சென்று."

"Who is there equal in thapas to Vjayan (Arjunan)
Who fights valiantly with his chariot drawn by steeds
driven by Krishna
He had the rare privilege to touch the PERSON of
The Lord of Kalahasti WHOM it is difficult for others to
know."

There is a story in Mahabharatha. When Arjuna was performing thapas to Lord Siva, Dhuriodanan instigated an asura to kill Arjuna. The asura took the form, of a wild boar and charged at Arjuna. Seeing this the Lord to save His devotee, in the guise of a hunter with His retinue and dogs killed the boar with an arrow. Arjuna who was disturbed from his thapas by the clamour of the hunters, the barking of the dogs and the snorting of the wild boar had sent an arrow himself. A wordy hot argument ensued as to who killed the wild boar which ultimately led to blows. Arjuna hit the Lord with the bow, it was followed by hand to hand fight. Arjuna was hurled into the air. Nothing discomfited by the fall. Arjuna returned to the fray when Lo! There was no Kirathan (Lord as Hunter,) to be seen. Then the Lord revealed Himself to Arjuna. This event demonstrates the intense bakthi of Arjuna.

CHAPTER - 3

The Saivaite Hindu Religion as this is called is completely different from Vedanta and is called Suddha advaita Siddhantham.

The vedanta posits only ONE REALITY behind the universe - Brahmmam.

***The Saiva Siddhantha posits tatvatrayam threefold reality - pathi psau and pasam which could be established logically, scientifically and epistemologically.**

The Vaidika rites require the division of the people into four varnas (caste) and led to the exclusion of the members of the last varna from the study of the Vedas and Vedanta. The division of the people into four varnas also led to the development of the varnaashrama dharma. The outcome of this was the doctrine that sanyasa was open alone to the Brahmanas and mukthi or veedu was attainable only after the special training in the life of the sanyasi. The corollary of this doctrine was that mukthi according to the vaidika path is attainable only by Brahmanas and in consequence the portals of Sankara Math are closed to non - Brahmanas.

The Siva agamas totally opposes these doctrines. Any one even a so called chandala of the lowest caste can procure a Sivalingam and perform Sivapooja. The Periapuranam the most sacred biographical masterpiece of religious literature on the lives of the Saiva saints, refers to sudra siva thondars who worshipped Lord Siva in temples.

Note :

*** Vide Pages 120 & 121, History of the Tamils From the Earliest Times to 600 AD - By P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar. Asian Educational Service, New Delhi. Madras . 1995**

The Vedanta and Vedas are sealed books to the Sudras. Badarayana a *sutrakara* has a special section establishing this view. He considered the sudras are not entitled to ceremonial purification and are prohibited from hearing the recital and the study of the Vedas.

Centuries later Swami Vivekananda gave Vedanta a new dimension freeing It from Brahminical fundamentalism and making it popular.

The Siva agamas on the contrary are open to all. Even a menial pariah by caste could receive Siva thikshai from an Adi Saiva Priest of the highest order of the Chidambaram temple, the *thillaival anthanar*. Pettan Samban a firewood cutter, a pariah by caste received thikshai from saint Umapathy Sivachariar belonging to the legendary *thillaival anthanars*, an exalted congregation of saintly Adi Saivas, privileged in the past to perform pujas and otherwise serve Lord Natarajah at the Chidambaram temple.

Sanyasam is not a necessary preliminary to Mukthi. Bhakthi opened to all castes can steer even a householder across the ocean of Samsara to Mukthi.

The system of Caste under the clock of Dharmam was introduced into the Tamil country by the Brahmanas during the vedic age. On the question of Saiva religion and the system of Caste Arumuga Navala Peruman states thus :

"சாதியினுஞ் சமயமே அதிகம். சமயத்தினுஞ் சாதி அதிகமெனக் கொள்வது சுருதி யுத்தி அனுபவ மூன்றுக்கும் முழுமையும் விரோதம்" - திருத்தொண்டர் புராணம் - நல்லூர் ஆறுமுகநாவலர் அவர்களால் கத்திய ரூபமாகச் செய்து சிதம்பர சைவப்பிரகாச வித்தியாசாலைத் தரும பரிபாலகர் அவர்களால் சென்னப்பட்டணம் வித்தியாதுபாலன் மந்திரசாலையில் 1953 ஆம் ஆண்டுப் பதிப்பு. உண்மை நாயன்மார் மகிமை பக்கம் 38.

To say that religion is subject to the Caste Restrictions and Considerations is Contradictory to the Principles of Scriptures, expediency and experiences " - Thiruthondar Puranam prose by Arumuga Navala AVL - Page 38 "The Glory of the Three Nayanmar." Navalur was not an adherent of caste, he only stressed on the strict observance of Saiva Ethics (சைவநெறி)

In this respect he always had a liberal outlook like the Saiva Nayanmars and Santnanacharias. Distinctions of caste, class and colour of skin are almost synonymous similarly are the untouchability of the Hindu Society and the apathied of the South African Society. Thanks to the reform zeal of Mahatma Gandhi and the granting of popular voting rights have eradicated the curse of untouchability. Similarly Nelson Mandela's epic struggle against the dominant white minority in South Africa has put an end to apartheid. Distinctions of caste, class and colour were borne with the Society from time immemorial

The concept of classless Society visualized by Karl Marks Lenin and Trostky and Mao were only a dream, the Russian and the Chinese Revolutions have failed to create a classless society hence their eradication seems to be an impossibility. Caste and the Untouchability were vocationally based and conditioned in the Hindu Society.

In the ancient days, there was animosity between the *vaidikas* and the *agamikas*. The latter denounced the shedding of blood in the name of Gods and opposed to the eating of all meat and fish and specially beef.

"South Indian Brahmanas of this period like those of the North India were meat eaters. They ate beef meat of the oxen and the cow and consumed intoxicant liquor known as *somapanam*. It was the impact of Tamil Saivism, and Jainism, that made them to become vegetarians and adopting abstention from meat and liquor" *The Brahmanas of South India are called *smartas*. In fact vegetarian in Tamil is called "Saivam".

The *vaidikas* on the other hand regarded the *agamas* with supreme contempt. The Adi Saivas (temple priests) are regarded as inferior Brahmanas having had their origin from the Dravidians.

For the *agamikas* the temple worship is a must. To the Vedantists it is not necessary.

Even *Jeevan mukthas* (saints attaining Mukthi during their life time while in their bodies) regularly worshipped in temples. The four Nayanmars (jeevan mukthas) visited regularly the temples throughout the length and breadth of South India worshipping and singing soul stirring Hymns. The Jeevan Mukthas continued temple worship to

ward off the onslaught of the *vasana malam*. - remnant of the *anava malam* - the ego, the consciousness of "I" and "Mine" of an individual. This remnant is best illustrated by the common example of a container that had previously *asafoetida* (*perunkayam*). The remnant of the *vasana malam* could be perilous.

Originally the *agamic* methods of worship being entirely fireless and not being accompanied by the recitation of vedic mantras, must have been developed from the *dasyu* - non Aryan rites.

"The *dasyu* ritual consisted in offering food to the deity to the accompaniment of ritual singing and dancing. That was how, according to Valmiki, the coronation of Sugriva was celebrated, a coronation being in those days not a secular but a religious ceremonial". The non-Aryan people who lived in India and Sri Lanka before the advent of the Aryan hordes were called *dasyus*. In course of time the fire rites has been absorbed into the *agamic* mode of worship.

Dasyus were many tribes, most prominent and numerous were *yakshas* (இயக்கர்), - leader Ravana ; Nagas - cobra tribe; the monkey tribe - Vali, Sugrivan and Hanuman belonged to this tribe, the latter were not really monkeys. They had monkey as its totem. They were not uncivilized aborigines or animals devouring humans as alleged maliciously by the Aryans who were their enemies. Both Ravana and Vali were great Saivaites devoted to the worship of Lord Siva. They were valiant at war.

It should be noted both in the Vedas and the epics and *puranams* side by side with vicious denunciations of the alleged savagery of the *dasyus*, there are innumerable passages referring to their high civilisation, their castles and palaces their gold ornaments their wealth etc.

Mayan, Visvakarma and Mahaduwatta were great architects and sculptors in building castles, temple and palaces, all *dasyus*. Mandothari, Queen of Ravana and the daughter of Mayan was not second to Sita in beauty, grace, and pathy *bakthi*. Mandothari excelled Sita, in Siva *bakthi*. Lord Siva described as "தென்னாடுடைய சிவன்" Lord of the Southern realm, on many occasions crossed the ocean from His abode at Uttarakosa Mankai Temple and appeared before Mandothari in human form at her palace.

Ravana was a great scholar of the Vedas, he was an expert in reciting "sama veda" to music, he was without an equal. The rishis Viswamithra, Agastya and Pulasthiar were also dasyus. They were not barbarians waiting to be civilized by the Aryans who were a nomad tribe rearing cattle in the steppes of Central Asia before they intruded into India.

In Rama's time Aryan customs began to infiltrate but slowly south of Godavari river. This compelling influence of Aryan civilization made some *rakshasas* to learn Sanskrit. Ravana too had become an expert in it. Moreover many *rakshasas* became great Brahmanas, scholars of the Vedas and performers of austerities. They were called Brahmarakshasas. Agasthiar and Viswamithirar belonged to this class. Pulasthiar, Ancestor of Ravana was also a Brahmarakshasa.

Great must have been the consequences of Raman's victory and extinction of Ravana's power south of the Godavari River and the Vindya Hills. The Aryans who had been pushing to the South of the Janasthana (outpost of Ravana at the southern bank of the River Godavari) even before Rama's time had now spread in larger numbers further south. The number of Brahmarakshasas increased.

The word Brahmarakshasas originally meant either the progeny of Brahmanas who allied themselves with dasyus like the sons of Viswamitra who were banished by the irate rishi to the south. They became Brahmanas and formed the Viswamitra or Kausika gotras and those who became disciples of Agastya were affiliated to his gotra (lineage). Even before these the Bhargavas and their spiritual descendants had begun to spread in South India. The Bhagavata Purana IX 16-29-37 says that Maddhucchandas and the other younger sons who obeyed Viawamitra became Kausikas and other elder sons who disobeyed him belonged to the Viswamitra gotra. It is clear that the Brahmanas of the South India were not of Aryan origin and their claim that they are superior to Adi Saivars is not tenable.

The New Brahmanas of the South in some respects preserve the customs of the Vedic age intact and in some others they have adopted south Indian customs that were un aryan, such as tying of thali as the most important act of the marriage rite and the wearing

round the neck a bit of thread dyed in turmeric. Another non-Aryan custom is the one in which the husband that is to be is welcomed by the mother of the bride and bride's maids is a relic of the old Dasyu rites, he and his bride are made to stand beneath the marriage pandal, their feet is symbolically washed in milk and balls of rice dyed in red and thrown in all directions.

Another is taking of the right hand of the bride by the bride groom and the taking of the seven steps as the ritual act of the sacrament of the marriage. The aforementioned reception of the bride and bridegroom under the pandal, put up for the occasion is described in 'agam 86'

The balls of rice mixed with blood such as is described in Thirumurugatrupadai is offered to Murugan in worshipping Him.

These customs must have been introduced into Arya rites of vivaha (marriage) by the dasyu ladies whom the early Arya immigrants married. These Brahmanas follow the vaidika cult of Hinduism.

It was the Aryan civilisation, culture and religion the starting point in the history of the delineation of the civilizations of India and Sri Lanka. Prior to this was a dark period as there was no direct and authentic evidence of the history of India and Sri Lanka before the advent of Aryans. In the circumstances the epochal discoveries of the buried cities of Mohenjadarro in the Sind and the Harappa in Punjab have revolutionized the saga of the ancient pre- Aryan and pre Vedic history of the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka which were inter connected from time immemorial. Further the recent excavations have revealed more buried sites and remains in places far apart in the Indian sub - continent evidencing that the Indus Valley civilizations spread over an extensive part of India.

The Indus Valley civilization was a highly developed one and it must have taken number of millennia to reach that stage.

The most significant feature of these findings is that the Mohenjadarro site contains a series of cities built on the top of the ruins of another. So far seven layers have been excavated many more may yield if excavated further.

The people of this civilization were Dasyus of whom the Nagas, Yakshas and the people of Vali, Suggreva and Hanuman were the most prominent tribes with their individual totems. They were all worshippers of Lord Siva and His Sakthi, the Mother Goddess. The artifact findings of female figures with elaborate head dress and ornamentation and dress and the figures of male deity seated with crossed legs on a pedestal like a Yogi are said to be anthropomorphic representation of Lord Siva and the Sivalingam the formless form, of Lord Siva as Sadasivamurthy are ample evidence of the cult of Siva and his Sakthi the mother Goddess;

"தென்னாடுடைய சிவனே போற்றி
எந்நாட்டவர்க்கும் இறைவா போற்றி."

Praise unto THEE the Lord of the southern country and praise unto THEE the God of all countries.

Thus sang Saint Manickavasagar in the third century A.D.

The earliest canons of Saivaite Hinduism are the Siva agamas 28 in number preceding in time to the thirumurais and meikanda shastras. Saint Manickavasagar who lived in the present Tamil Nadu in the 3rd century in his "keerthi thiruagavel" sings :

"மன்னு மாமலை மகேந்தர மதனிற்
சொன்ன ஆகமந் தோற்று வித்தருளியும்."

Lord Siva from the heights of the sacred Mahendra mountains revealed the Siva agamas. Valmiki's Ramayana has reference to the golden coloured Mahendra mountain now submerged under the ocean south of Cape Comerin*. This mountain abode of Lord Siva in the south was like the Mt. Kailash of the north. Ilangovadigal author of the 2nd century A.D., epic Silappathikaram refers to the submerged continent as the old territory of the Pandian dynasty at the southern extremity of which a gigantic mountain chain called Panmalai and a huge river called Pahruli were situated, India was known as Navalam* in those days and Kumari Kandam as it was known "based on facts and figures found in *irayanar ahapporul* and Buddhist sources".

Note :

* Vide The cultural contribution of the Tamils' by C. Rajasingham.

CHAPTER - 4

The date when Ceylon got split from the main land of Kumari Kandam is 2317 B. C. **

Saint Manickavasagar in his "keerthi thiruvahaval" (thiruvagasam) further sings

"கேவேட ராகிக் கெளிறது படுத்து
மாவேட்ட டாகிய ஆகமம் வாங்கியும்
மற்றவை தம்மை மகேந்தி ரத்திருந்து
உற்றவைம் முகங்க ளாற்பணித் தருளியும்."

This refers to the loss of the Siva agamas into the ocean and Lord Siva manifesting himself as a fisherman retrieved them from the depth of the ocean.

Thus we find the Siva agamas are ancient beyond the concept of history and were in writing unlike the Vedas.

"Slowly, very slowly the Vedanta and Agama schools gravitated towards each other, in the puranas they exist side by side yet not blended into one. Even in the time of Adi Sankarar (8th century A.D.) we find the fundamental differences persisted and they were

Note :

** Valmiki Ramayana and Sivatharumoththaram of Maraignana Sambanthar refer to the existance of Mahendra mountain as situated south of Pothigai hills. (Maraignana Sambandar mentioned here is different form the Maraignana Sambandar of Meikanda Santhanam).

- Vide p. 25 Thiruvagasam with elaborate commentary, By Thirukural Vel G. Varatharajan, Palaniappa Brothers Madras Publication. (This mountain has gone under the ocean)

* Tennents History Ceylon p. 7.

not amalgamated into one. Adi Sankarar in expanding the Vedanta sutras follows Badarayana and condemns the agamas as heretical, yet his "prapanca hridya" is a pure agama work and he is called "Sanmathasthapanacarya" because according to tradition he systematized the worship of Siva, Vishnu, Sakthi Ganapathy, Subramanya and Suriya and introduced it in the rituals observed in maths founded by him. * Saivaite Hindus long before the advent of saint Manickavasagar (3rd Century A.D.) accepted both the Vedas and the Siva agamas. They are said to be collateral, if there is any conflict between the two the Siva agamas supersede.

During the time of Saint Manicavasagar there was a highly developed system of Saivite Hindu religion based on the Siva agamas and it must have taken thousands of years to reach that stage.

Maraimalai Adigal of Tamilnadu (1876 to 1950) the great scholar of Saiva Siddhantha and Tamil, after extensive research concluded that Saint Manickavasagar lived in the 3rd century A. D. His findings are further supported by the following references to Saint Manickavasagar in the 4th Thirumurai of Saint Navukkarasar of the 7th century A. D. :

- 1) "வைகைத் திருக்கோட்டி நின்றதோர் திறமும் தோன்றும்."
- திருப்புவணத் திருத்தாண்டகம்
- 2) "நரியைக் குதிரை செய்வானும்."
- திருவாரூர்ப் பதிகம்
- 3) "குடமுழ நந்தீசனை வாசகனாகக் கொண்டீர்."
- பொதுத் திருத்தாண்டகம்

- 1) "Excellence of His presence at the sacred Banks of Vaikai."
- *Thirupoovana Thiruthandagam*
- 2) "He Who changes jackals into steeds."
- *Thiruvavarur Pathigam*
- 3) "You Lord accepted Nandeesan Who plays on the pot drum as Vasagan."
- *General Thiruthandagam*

Note :

* Vide History of Tamil Nadu from the earliest Times to 600 A.D by P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar. Asian Educational Services.

These are divine never failing words (பொய்யாமொழி) of Saint Navukkarasar.

By the close of the 3rd century A. D., the muventhar (Chola, Pandya and Sera Kings) of the Tamil speaking people owing to their internecine wars had become weak and disorganised, they were vulnerable to invading hordes from outside; just then a tribal dynasty of rulers known as Kalapirar who had established a kingdom on the borders of the Tamil country, in Kannada invaded and occupied many parts of the Tamil territories. For about three centuries they ruled with an iron hand, they professed fundamental form of Jainism. This was a dark period for Saivism, Tamil and the culture in the Tamil country.

All religious and cultural activities were stilled, temples were closed, Saivism had a big set back. Finally when the Kalapirars were defeated in war by the Pandys and Pallavas, in the wake of their retreat Jainism in the most bigoted form had taken route in the Tamil country. Both the Pandyan and Pallava kings in the 7th century A. D. had become Jains, a ruthless and unscrupulous Jain priestly hierarchy controlled the countries and the respective kings. Saivism was at its lowest ebb, wearing viputhy and uttering Sivanamam were serious offences. All violations were punished severely. So much so the Pandyan Queen (Chola Princess) Mangaiyarkarasiar who remained as an indomitable Saivaite was wearing viputhi under cover on her bosom. It was left to Saints Thiru Gnanasambandar and Navukkarasar to bring back the respective kings to the fold of Saivism and re-establish Saiva neethi to its most exalted glory: following the footsteps of Saints ThiruGnanasambandar and Thirunavukkarasar, Sundarar (8th Century A.D) last of the thevara trios like his predecessors visited the temples in the length and breadth of South India singing Hymns and causing miracles, he consolidated the work of the previous two.

This renaissance set in motion with vigour by the Nayanmars with their soul stirring Hymns in (தீந்தமிழ்) pure Tamil and the series of miracles and contact with masses transcending all caste and other social disability introduced into the Saiva Tamil society under Aryan Brahmanical influence, brought about an upsurge of bhakti among

the people and their rulers. This in later years generated unprecedented temple building activity under the Cholas who held sway over South India and Sri Lanka.

The nayanmars - Saints Thirugnanasambandar and Sundarar singing thevara pathigams from the shores of Rameswaram on the Lord of the ancient Temple of Thiruketheeswaram and Saint Navukkarasar praising the Lord of Thirukeetheeswaram in the first two and a half line of his Thevaram on Thiruveelimilai and Saint Thirugnanasambandar singing a pathikam on the presiding deity of Thirukoneswaram of Thirukonamalai, Sri Lanka, brought north and east parts of Sri Lanka which are Saivaite and Tamil speaking into the orbit of their renaissance movement. North and east of Sri Lanka remain as the bastion of Saiva Siddhanta tradition and the Tamil language in its pristine purity more than in Tamil Nadu.

The aforementioned temple building activity commenced with the Dowager Queen Sembianmadevi, the grand aunt of Rajaraja Cholan I. She built several new temples and rebuilt in granite renowned ancient temples which were of bricks.

The Cholas of the Vijayalan Dynasty were one of the most gifted of dynasties which hailed in India. The Cholas - Rajarajan-1, his valiant son Rajendran-1 grandsons Rajathirajan-1, Rajendra Deva-11, and Virarajendran who followed on the throne in that order and the grandsons of Rajendra-1 by his daughter - Kulothungan-1 and his successors Kulothungan 11 otherwise known as Anapayan, Rajaraja 11 and Kulothungan 111 were all great devotees of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram and Thiagesar of Thiruvavur. All the Cholas were crowned at the Natarajah temple, Chidambaram by the legendary *thillaival anthanar adisaivas*.

Rajarajan-1's great grandfather Parantaka (905-955 A.D.) covered the roof of the Nataraja Temple of Chidambaram with sheets of gold. Cholas made several liberal endowments to these temples.

Rajarajan-1 built the great temple of Tanjore, the grandest of the Chola temples, his son Rajendran-1 built the magnificent temple of Gangaikonda Cholapura, Rajarajan 11, the Son of Kulothungan 11 built the great temple of Darasuram close to Kumbakonam and Kulothungan 111 built the stupendous Thirupuvanam temple with a

separate temple for Sarapar within its complex, a unique manifestation of Lord Siva taken to subdue Vishnu as Narasimha who ran amok after killing Irania Kassipu and drank his blood, this temple is also close to Kumbakonam. Thiruketeeswaram temple has an exquisite Icon of Sarapar.

Natarajah temple of Chidambaram held the Cholas under a spell, with the result successive later Chola rulers devoted more and more attention and state resources to the expansion and embellishment of the temple which is considered as their kula theivam.

Kulotunga 11 (A.D. 1133 to 1150) otherwise known as "Anapayan" according to *Kulotunga ula* sung by his court poet Ottakuthan gilded with gold the Ponnambalam and built seven storeyed gopurams etc.

Since Chidambaram temple immemorially known as a Saivaite temple and as the seat of Saiva religion, Kulotunga considered the presence of the Govindaraja shrine as an anachronism and got it removed. Now it has been restored.

The great achievement of his reign from the point of view of Saiva religion is the composition of the epic Periapuranam by Saint Sekkilar.

Raja Raja 11 (A.D. 1146 to 1172) son of Kulotunga 11 became crown Prince in 1146 A. D.

Raja Rajah 11's rule was peaceful and was a period of religious and literary activities, the extent of the Empire remained unaltered. Gangai Konda Cholapuram was his capital, and Palayarai alias Ayirattali was his subsidiary capital.

The poet Ottakuthan composed *the raja raja cholan ula* on him. Raja Raja 11 mostly stayed in Palayarai close to Darasuram.

The *Rajaraja Cholan ula* and *takkayagaparani* sung by his poet Ottakuthan mention his temple building activities. While his grandfather Vikrama Chola and father Kulontunga 11 concentrated their attention mainly on expanding and embellishing existing temples, Raja Raja 11 built some magnificent new edifices, among them is the Raja Rajeswaram Udayar Temple of Darasuram in his

alternate capital city. This temple is now known as Airavateeswarar of Darasuram which is about four kilometres from Kumbakonam. This is one of the four stupendous all stone vimana temples built by Imperial Cholas, the others being Rajarajewaram of Tanjore built by RajaRajan I. Gangaikonda Cholapuram, built by his son Rajendran I and Thirubhuvana Iswaram built by Kulotunga 111 (A. D. 1178 to 1218)

"In grandeur and sheer beauty of sculpturing, each vies with the others and each is great in its own way unique".

Rajarajah 11 like Rajarajah 1 revered and loved to listen to the singing of thevaram and other thirumurai Hymns.

In the *prakaram* of the Darasuram temple he had installed one hundred eighth (108) statues in stone of the *othuvars* who were regularly singing thevaram and other *thirumurai* Hymns at the temple as part of the temple rites and otherwise.

Only those who had received Siva *thikshai* (initiation from a competent guru) could serve the Lord at the temple. The mantram imparted by the guru to the disciple at the time of the Siva *thikshai* is Sri panchaksharam - *namasivaya* (நமசிவாய). Consequently the afore-mentioned *othuvars* appointed by Raj Rajah 11 to sing thevaran and other thirumurai Hymns had received Siva *thikshai*. They received the most sublime form of Siva *thikshai* known as *nirvana thikshai*. Out of the three prescribed in the Siva agamas, the other two being in the order of merit are Siva *thikshai* (சமய தீக்கை) and *viseda thikshai*. Each of them were christened with a *thiksha namam* following the initiation - Isana Sivan, Agora Sivan and Thatpurusha Sivan were some of the *thiksha* names. They did not receive the *acharya abishekam* which is another exalted ceremony for inducting a person as a *sivachariar* (Priest), hence it is wrong to describe them as *Sivachariars*. The effect of the *nirvana thikshai* was that it destroyed their accumulated karma (சஞ்சிதமலம்) and made them perfect (பக்குவமடைதல்) to serve the Lord with absolute devotion and dedication without any other thought. The king to glorify them had established (தாபனஞ்செய்தல்) their images in stone in the *prakara* of the temple. The king treated them as *bhaktas* (பக்தர்கள்) along with the *nayanmars*.

In Saiva religion there are two categories of officiating priests who are learned in the Vedas, Siva agamas, thirumurais and meikanda shastras. The first category of priests are recruited from the adi saivas of Dravidian origin, these priests officiate in Saiva temples, they are prohibited from performing funeral rites and post funeral rites. They should be married. They receive nirvana thikshai and acharya abishekam to function as officiating priests in Saiva temples. The second category are known as Saiva kurukals, they too receive nirvana thikshai and acharya abishekam to function as priests, they perform funeral rites and post funeral rites. They too should be married persons. They are selected from non adisaivas who are traditionally of vegetarian family groups observing Saiva traditions.

CHAPTER - 5

SRI KRISHNA'S SIVA THIKSHAI

Sri Krishna it appears had failed to get himself initiated, but he had established a Sivalingam and was performing *Sivapusiai* daily.

One day the disciples of the great rishi Upamaniya munivar went and told him that flowers were scarce. He directed them to the place where the flowers used by Lord Krishna was dumped. These were fetched and with them the rishi performed his Siva pusa. Now this went on for sometime. Sri Krishna procured flowers from distant parts of his kingdom and used them in his pusai. The rishi then got those flowers fetched and used them anew in his devotion. When Lord Krishna came to know this through his servants was in great anger that the rishi was using flowers which were nirmalyam. (used flowers) The irate Lord Krishna went to the rishi and demanded explanation for the latter using once used flowers (nirmaliyam). The rishi calmly told Sri Krishna that his pusai was not at all a pusai since he had not received Siva dikshai and his flowers could not therefore be considered as having been once used (nirmalyam).

Sri Krishan is then said to have begged for and obtained initiation from Upamania munivar. Sri Krishana then began Siva pusai anew.

Cholas were the greatest temple builders India had known their achievements in this field and sculpture both in bronze and stone attained unprecedented and unsurpassed height of skill and elegance during the reign of Rajarajan-1. Temples were built not only in their homeland but also in the conquered territories extending from Sri Lanka in the south to the river basins of Tungabadra and Godavari

and even as far as the Mahendra hills of Orissa in the north. The great ancient temple of Thiruketheeswaram was rebuilt in the elegant Chola style and it was renamed Rajarajeswaram by Rajendra Cholan-1. He made several endowments and like the great temple of Tanjore directly administered it. Number of temples were built at Polonaruwa by the Cholas.

The building of Raja Rajeswaram of Tanjore and other great temples of stupendous proportion were all labour of love unlike the Pyramids of Egypt or the Taj Mahal of Agra in India where slaves and forced labour were used.

The making of icons in Pancha Loga-gold, silver, copper, brass and tin tead was in the most advanced stages during the time of Rajarajah-1, when some of the exquisite and incomparable metal images of all time were cast. Adalvallen (Natarajah) is a masterpiece.

At Thiruketheeswaram we have an elegant Somaskandar icon bearing the Chola stamp. All our fine arts prospered during the Chola period, this period of Cholas could be called the golden age of the Tamils. Rajarajan-1 had laid the foundation for a great empire. He had built large standing army and a powerful navy more than any other ruler in India. By his time the naval supremacy of the Chola had been well established in the Indian ocean and his reign culminated with the consequent conquest of Lakkadives - 12000 Islands off the western coast - Arabian sea. His Kingdom extended from Sri Lanka in the South to the basin of Tungabadra in the north and Mahendra Giri in the north east. A western Chalukya inscriptions at Hossur (Dharwar district of Karnataka state) avers that the Chola army which fought a bloody battle there under the command of his Son Rajendran-1 against Satyasraya of the western Chalukyas consisted of nine lakhs of soldiers. The total strength of the standing army must have been considerably larger than this figure when we take into account of his engagements in other sectors such as Pandya country, Malainadu, Vengi and Sri Lanka.

Note :

* Vide kurmapuranam for the story on Sri Krishana receiving Siva Dikshai.

Vide Periyapuranam - "யாதவன் துவரைக்கு இறையாகிய மாதவன் முடிமேல் அடி வைத்தவன்" - "He who places his feet on the head of Madhavan, Yathava chief of Duwarakai".

Rajarajan-1 lost his parents in his boyhood. In his formative age he came under the influence of the Dowager Queen Sembian Madevi, a grand aunt of his and his own elder sister Kundavi. They were both cultured and deeply religious devoted to Lord Siva. They were engrossed in listening to the singing of thevaram hymns in traditional *pan isai*.

The ritual singing off thevaram is a practice of great antiquity. There is no way of knowing when exactly this practice began, but from the middle of the eight century A. D. there are inscriptional evidence of endowments having been made for this purpose. Pallava King Nandivarman 11 of the middle of the 8th century A. D. had made an endowment and it is found at Tiruvallam. During the reign of Parantaka-1 (Chola) three endowments could be traced, they were at Lalgudy, Thiruvavaduthurai and Andanallur.*

Rajarajan-1 was a devotee of Lord Siva. His tutelary Deities were Natarajah of Chidambaram and Thiagesar of Thiruvarur. His spiritual mentor was saint Karur Thevar who was one of the galaxy of the Nine saints who sang thiruvisaippa and thirupallandu of the *thirumurai* hymns composed of twelve cantos. In the Thanjavur Rajarajaeswaram temple there is a painting marked PLC 10 of Rajarajan-1 and Karur Thevar.

Rajarajan-1's religious devotion took two forms. One was building of temples and other was his desire to unearth the complete set of the thevara hymns which were in ola scripts. None of them were available in his kingdom. The devotion to Lord Siva and the Love for the thevaram hymns, he has inherited from his great grand aunt the Dowager Queen Sembian Madevi and his sister Kundavi, royal ladies of great dignity.

Rajarajan-1 prayed to Lord Natarajah and his prayers were answered forthwith, the thevaram hymns came to light through a miracle which brought him glory greater than his kingship. The discovery of hymns through Nambi Andar Nambigal and their

Note :

* Vide Middle Chola temples A. D. 985 -1070 S. R. Balasubramanian.

* Vide Early Chola temples of S. R. B.

popularization by the King by the appointment of othuvans in large numbers to every temple, largest being to the Peria Udayar temple of Tanjore, was associated with a miracle popular in the history of Saivism. By another miracle Rajarajan-1 through Madangasoodamani a descendent of Thiruneelakanda Yalpanar who accompanied in his yal to Sambandar when he sang the thevara Hymns, restored the original *pann* to the respective *pathigams*. He got Nambiandar Nambi to arrange into seven cantons; *Thevaram*, *Thiruvagasam*, *Thirukovaiyar* as the eighth canton. Both these miracles took place in the temple of Chidambaram. His great wisdom is equally seen here: Raja Rajan-1 caused the 8200 verses that comprised the new discovery from an underground chamber of the Nararajah temple of Chidambaram inscribed in a copper plate for the benefit of the posterity, more than the others. This was his greatest contribution to mankind. It was these hymns which inspired the construction of hundreds of Siva temples by him and his successors. These and his devotion to Lord Siva earned him the epithet "Sivapathasekaran".

Rajendra -1 Son of Rajaraja-1 succeeded his father to the Chola throne he was equally valourous and religious like his father. He got Nambiandar Nambigal to arrange Thiruvisaippa and Thirupallandu as the ninth canto. Thiruwanthiram as the tenth canto and the Thiruvalavudayar Pasurams, Karaikkal Ammiayar Hymns and his own hymns as the eleventh canto.

Nambiandar Nambigal who was a school going lad during the period of Raja Raja 1 had flowered into manhood. He was an erudite saivait scholar and an Arulalar. Rajendra-1 built the great edifice Gangaikonda Chola puram. His devotion to, Sivaperuman and love to Thevara Hymns were similar to his fathers.

Since the manthirams were seven Crores, the Thevarams were made into the first seven Cantos. Moreover Manthirams were eleven in numbers. Thirumarais were made into eleven Cantos vide-Thirumarai Kandapuram of "Umapathy Sivacharar." Subsequently the great Epic Periapuranam was sung at Golden Hall of Chidamparam in the presence of Nadarajah Peruman and the Assembly of the Monarch and Saivait Scholars and Devotees. The first syllable "Ulakelum" was prompted by Nadarajah Peruman.

Since it was undoubtedly an Arulalar's work it was assigned as the twelveth Canto of Thirumurai by the Monarch and the Assembly of scholars who formally approved and released it and recorded in Copper leaves.

The first Canto of Panniru Thirumurai is the Thevaram of Gnanasambandar with the first hymn opening as "Thodu-udaiya Sivan" this along with "Ukaram of Ulakelum represent the mona syllable of the "PIRANAVA" manthiram "AUM" (ஓம்). This made the cantonisation as final and conclusive.

CHAPTER - 6

The next phase in the development of Saivism is the composition of the Periapuranam of Sekklar, the Prime Minister of kulothungan 11, otherwise known as Anapayan. Sundarar thiruthonda thogai and Nambi Andar Nambigal's Thiruthonda anthathi were the precursors of the great composition Periapuranam. In Saivism the worship of Sivan adiaris' is as good as the worship of Lord Siva, hence the importance and relevance of Periapuranam as a sacred Saiva literature. Periapuranam is the twelveth and the final canto of the Panniru thirumurais." Periapuranam is the evidence of the pervasive influence of Saivism into every state of Tamil society".

Saint Sekkilar entreated Lord Natarajah of Chidambaram and invoked His GRACE to make the composition. The Lord prompted the first syllable of the composition ('Ulakelam') of the invocatory verse - the first one.

In the chamber 9 of the vimanam of the great temple of Tanjore in a panel, a marvellous painting of Rajarajan-1 and his three Queens worshipping Lord Natarajah of Cidambaram. In this Rajarajan-1 sports a kothu kondai and a beard and moustache and the pancha katcham tugged up to the knee. He looks young and tall and sprightly and majestic.

Finally, so far as the Saivaite Hindu Temples are concerned what is applicable to them are the Siva Agamas and not the Vedas. Temples as religious Institutions were unknown to the Vedic period or did not form part of the Vedic form of worship. This view is supported by several eminent Savants and research scholars.

Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar of Nallur Jaffna :

"பராத்தலிங்கப் பிரதிட்டை, பரார்த்த பூசை, உற்சவம் முதலியனவற்றை விதிப்பன சிவாகமங்களேயன்றி வேதங்கள் மிருதிகளல்ல."

"It is Saiva Agamas which prescribe the mode of Poojas, festivals and consecration of images and symbols for religious worship and not the Vedas or Smritis."

Saiva Periyar S. Shivapade Sundaranar, B. A. :

"Temple worship is governed by the Agamas. These are God given that they are so declared by Saints as Manickavasagar and Thirumoolar.

Professor Max Muller, the Editor of the Sanskrit text of Rig Veda with Sayana Bhasyam:

"One can say without much fear of contradiction that the religious practices among the higher strata of the Vedic Aryans did not include the worship of images in the house or in temples.

C. V. Vadya, M. A., L. L. B. Author of Epc India :

"It cannot be definitely stated that there were temples wherein Idols were installed and worshipped."

Prof. A. B. Keith, Author of religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads:

"The Rig veda and in the later period alike the Cult of Gods is marked by the absence of any Temple of house of God even of the simplest kind"

R. C. Dutt, M. A., C. I. E., Translator of the Rig Veda into Bengales and Author of civilisation of In Ancient India :

"There are no indications in the Rig Veda of any temples reared by mortal hands and consecrated as places of Worship."

Dr. S. Radha Krishan in his book on Religion and Society:

"The Vedic Aryans possessed no Temples and used no Images. The Dravidian culture promoted Image Worship and insisted on Pooja in place of Yajna."

Swami Vivekananda in his famous address at Chicago :

"All rituals from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin are guided by the Agamas or Tautras."

These authoritative opinions are conclusive on the point that the Agamas alone governed Temples and Temple Worship and not to Vedas or Smrtis which arose from the Vedas - Sessional paper V of 1951.

By the turn of the 12th century A. D. various theological systems and religions which were not absolute and rational like Saivism took root in the present Tamil Nadu. It was left to saint Meikandar (young and divinely enlightened like Gnanasambandar) and his santhana paramparai - Arunandi Sivam, Maraignana Sambandar and Umapathy Sivachariar and two other saintly scholars (outside the santhana paramparai) to expound the canon of Saiva Siddhantam in 14 cantos.

Following the rationalistic and analytical exposition of Saiva Siththantham by Meikanda santhanam there were successors of teachers and expositors of Saiva Siddhantam in a more explanatory character of principles which were postulated in the Meikanda shastras. The said teachers were known as *pandara sannadhis* and their works were called *pandara shastras*.

These pandara sannadhis are of a religious order of the Saiva Hindus that came into existence in or about the 16th century A. D. in the present Tamil Nadu. They are known as atheenams and madams. The former is a high order. The most illustrious of the atheenams are Thiruvavaduthurai and Dharmapuram and of the madams the Sri Kasi madam of Thirupanandal.

The founder of Thiruvavaduthurai atheenam was Namasivayar, of Dharmapuram was Sri GuruGnana Sambanthar and of Sri Kasi Madam was Kumara gurubarar all of spiritual strength and attainment and scholarship and learning. Thiruvavaduthurai had Sivagnana munivar (1785) who wrote the highly intellectual work called *Sivagnanapadiam*, besides he had written commentaries on *sivagnanabodham* and *sivagnanasiththar* and there was maha vidwan Meenakshisundaram Pillai a great scholar of Tamil and Saiva Siddhantam. He was a contemporary and friend of Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar of Nallur, Jaffna. Navalar was invited by the

Note :

* Vide Cultural contribution off the Tamils' C. Rajasingham.

Thiruvavaduthurai atheenam and honoured. In fact the title Navalar was conferred by the atheenam. Dharmapura atheenam is in charge of about 29 Saiva temples. most of them *padal petra thalams*. These are well managed according to the Siva agamic Traditions. The present incumbent of the Dharmapura atheenam Sri La Sri Shanmuga Desika Paramacharia Guru Maha Sannithanam, has set up a special fund in trust about Rs. 2800000 for the study and the advancement of Saiva Siththantham on an international level by holding conferences and seminars. A Seminar was held in Toronto Canada in the year 1994. He is an exemplary Scholar and adheres to the life of celibacy.

Dharmapura atheenam is running a school for the study of Vedas, *Siva agamas*, *thirumurai* and *meikanda shastras*. Priests (sivachariars) and othuvars are trained in the school, besides it has a college for higher studies in Tamil. The othuvars sing thevaram, thiruvasakam, thiruvisaippa, thirupallandu and puranam (panchapuranam) in the temples as part of the daily poojas and festivals.

All the atheenams and madams have almost identical functions and common objectives. Similarly is Sri Kasimadam of Thirupanandal with its enlightened incumbent.

Today the atheenams and madams are the real repositories of Saiva Siddhantam, Saiva Traditions and Tamil studies. The incumbents and their juniors are scholarly, they are austere and celibate. The incumbents and their juniors wear saffron *vetty* and *rudraksha* and *vibudi* as symbols of their religious order. These are in fact new concepts and a new order of religious gurus of Saivaite Hinduism. This is an innovation that took place about the 16th century A. D. Wearing saffron vetty and celibacy was not known in the past. None of the nayanmars wore saffron cloth (kavi) except Sakkiar who was a Buddhist monk. Good number of them were married, both men and woman.

The Chidambaram temple represents "Akasa" of the category of the five elements that compose the universe. It is being held in higher veneration more than any other *padal petra thalam* numbering 274 (sanctified by the thevara hymns). Saivaitees with deep respect

refer to it as "Koil". It is used reverentially and exclusively to the Chidambaram temple.

Through centuries Chidambaram Natarajah temple played a vital role more than any other temple in the development and preservation of Saivism and Saiva Siddhantham. Saint Umapathy Sivachariar the most distinguished of the Thillai Val Anthanar (Saintly group of Adisaivar officiated as priests at the Chidambaram Natarajah temple) was the last of the saintly meikanda santhanam, authors of the fourteen Saiva Siththantha shastras - the theological canon of the Saivaites.

Lord Natarajah of Chidambaram was the patron Deity of the Vijayalaya dynasty of the Cholas. All the four *nayanmars* visited Chidambaram and worshipped Lord Natarajah, all four have sung innumerable sacred hymns on Lord Natarajah.

Saint Manickavasagar spent the closing years of his life at Chidambaram and attained moksha by merging into Divinity in the central shrine. Manickavasagar sang again all the thiruvasaga and thirukovaiyar hymns to Lord Natarajah and the Lord in His Own Hand recorded them for the benefit of mankind.

Saint Akora Sivachariar the author of *paththathy* - hand book containing the relevant mantras (sacred letters) and rules and instructions extracted from the Siva agams for due performance of Saiva temple rites had established a madam adjoining Chidambaram Natarajah temple. This *paththathy* is currently used by all Sivachariars.

Durvasa munivar Saivate and a devotee of Lord Siva was the manasika guru of Akora Sivachariar. He directed Akora Sivachariar to establish the madam at Chidambaram. The following anecdote is interesting. Durvasa munivar in one of his sojourns reached Chidambaram at 2 A.M. feeling hungry begged for food. None would get up at the untimely hour and give him food. The irate munivar cursed Chidambaram, to his dismay it did not work, however, Ambigai Sivakamasundari, the Sakthi of Lord Natarajah, pitied the munivar, appearing as a housewife offered him food. The munivar tasting the food realized it was divine and it was Goddess Sivakami who offered him food and apt in devotion offered prayers to Goddess

Sivagamasundari and Lord Natarajah. The moral of this episode is that Chidambaram's sanctity makes it immune to any curser.

Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna the great Saiva savant of the 19th century A. D. considered Chidambaram as the epic centre of Saivism. He established a Saiva School and had planned to establish a University for the study of Veda Siva Agamas, Saiva Siddhantam and Tamil; in fact he had purchased extensive lands in the vicinity of Chidambaram. Unfortunately the controversies he had with the Diksathar for not taking sivadiksha and with the followers of Ramlinga Vallalar over his arudpa nullified the University project, however it was left to Raja Sir M. A. Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad one of the greatest philanthropist and patron of Tamil studies and arts to establish the Annamalai University at Chidambaram.

Referring to the existence of a reclining Vishnu in the *chitsabai* complex of Lord Natarajah, saint Manickavasagar quipped in the following verse of thirukovaiar :

"புரங்கடந்தானடி காண்பான் புவிவிண்டு புக்கறியா
திரங்கிடெந் தாயென்றிரப்பத்தன் னீரடிக் கென்னிரண்டு
கரங்கடந் தானொன்று காட்டமற் றாங்கதூங் காட்டிடென்று
வரங்கிடந் தான்தில்லை யம்பல முன்றிலம் மாயவனே."

Maha Vishnu who was longing to have glimpse of the sacred feet of Lord Natarajah saw one but failed to see the other, was doing penance to have a glimpse of it.

During the post Chola period the Chidambaram Natarajah temple was subject to visissitudes, the worst was during the Franco-British war in India. In this war which took place in the present Tamil Nadu, the French army occupied the Chidambaram temple, Lord Natarajah was taken to Thiruvavarur for safety, in modern terms as a refugee. He was there for about ten years until the British routed the French at Porto Novo close to Chidambaram. It was during this period probably the legendry *thillaival anthanar*, a saintly class of Priests revered by Saivaites got lost completely or disappeared as a distinct and exalted order of adi saivas. Umapathy Sivachariar of Kottangudi was a thillaival anthanar and an adi saivar. He lived in the 14th century A. D. He was a priest of the Chidambaram temple serving Natarajah in turns with other priests.

Umapthy Sivacharar was a saint and a scholar of the Vedas, Saiva Agamas, Saiva Siddhantam and Tamil. He was the last of the meikandar santhanam (succession). He was the author of eight of the fourteen cantos of the cannon of Saiva Siddhantam. The outstanding ones are thiruvardupayan and sivapragasam.

Umapathy Sivachariar performed Siva dikshai to Pettan Samban and to a mullisedi (Plant) both had attained perfection and were awaiting for the sacred touch of a perfect guru.

The present officiating priests of Chidambaram Natarajah temple are called Diksathars. They are about 275 in number. They are the present hereditary trustees. They are initiated according to vaidika brahmanarities for the performance of temple rituals as well as the athmartha (personal) rites. They do not accept the Siva Agamas and Agara Sivachariar pathathis (hand book for temple rituals as prescribed in the Siva Agamas). Hence they could not be the descendants of the Thillaival Anthanar whose disappearance is a mystery.

In or about the year 1560 AD, Kapaleeswarar temple of Madras was destroyed and the Santhome Church and Bishop's house stands on the site. The present Kapaleeswarar temple in Mylapore was subsequently built. In the same year Thiruketheeswaram temple was destroyed by the Portuguese.

During the reign of the last of the Pandyan dynasty there were two rival claimants to the Pandyan throne, one of them invited Mallick Kapur an army general of the Tuklag. Mallick Kapur invaded Madurai. He looted Madurai of its wealth and caused damage to the ornamental pillars of Meenakshisundareswarar temple and retreated.

The 16th & 17th centuries were dark periods to the Saivaites of Sri Lanka who lived in the North and East. In succession the Portuguese and the Dutch occupied the country the Portuguese were the first to occupy. They destroyed almost all the temples. Both Thiruketheeswaram and Koneswaram temples were destroyed and Naguleswarar temple in the North was also destroyed. Good number of the people were forcibly made to embrace Roman Catholic faith. At old temple sites, churches were built with the materials of the broken temples. Metal icons were melted and church bells were cast.

The Dutch too were intolerant but not to the level of the Portuguese. Religious life of the people was at its lowest ebb. It was the late Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar who led the Saivaite fold out of this dark period and re-established Saivism. It were Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and S. Rajaratnam of the Hindu Board of Education and few other individuals with pioneering mission established Saivaite Hindu Education Institutions both for elementary and advanced studies and for the proper education of Saivaite children of both sex. The Thiruketheeswaram temple was partly restored and Koneswarar temple was fully restored.

*The present ethnic civil war has disturbed the Thiruketheeswaram temple. The temple is closed for the last ten years without pujas and festivals.

We hope and pray that good sense would prevail and peace is restored and an equitable political solution is found for the ethnic problem.

Saiva Periar the late S. Sivapatha Sundaranar of Puloly was a great Saiva Siddhantha Scholar. His commentaries on Thiruvarudpayan is a masterpiece. He in his "The Saiva School of Hinduism" has stated as follows :-

"Hinduism is a group of religions which accept the authority of the Vedas. Each member of the group has an authority of its own, which the Vedas supplement and in the light of which they are interpreted. The most important members of the group are Saivism,

*** Note :**

The temple has been fully ransacked and all the valuables have been stolen. It stands desecrated losing its sanctity. The pilgrims rests and the residence of the priests and the staff have been all totally destroyed.

The *gurukulam* (the *veda agama school*) and its buildings have all been razed to the ground.

The residents of Thiruketheeswaram and the adjoining Mantai village have all deserted their homes.

The temple stands deserted and is under the care of the Sri Lankan army. Consecration ceremony has to be performed by a team of Priests before pujas are commenced.

There are several other temples similarly stand closed or destroyed.

Vaishnavam and Shaktam, whose additional authorities are respectively the Siva Agamas, Pancharatra and the Shakta Agamas. They derive their names from Siva, Vishnu and Shakti. In spite of their akinness, they differ widely in their philosophy and ceremonials. Of these three religions Saivism, has the largest number of followers both in India and Ceylon".

In an article "The Hindu Society in Sri Lanka changed and changing", Professor S., Pathmanathan state as follows:

"Almost all Hindus in Sri Lanka are Saivaites, being the adherents of the Saiva Siddhanta School which developed in Tamil Nadu in South India during medieval times. As a religio-philosophical system, Saiva Siddhantam is based on the body of literature called the Agamas and the religious philosophic thought of the nayanmars who were the architects of Saivaitic revival in South India during the seventh and eighth centuries. The collection called thirumurai, divided into twelve sections and comprising the hymns of their four leading exponents of medieval South Indian Saivism, Gnana Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manickavasagar and the philosophical treatises of Meikanda Devar, his followers and disciples constituted the canonical literature of all Tamil Saivaites. This literature is placed by them on equal footing with the four Vedas.

The rituals performed by the Sivacharars however, based on the Vedic and Agamic tradition, Saivism as practised in Sri Lanka is in general terms, therefore a blend of the Vedagama tradition with that of Saiva Siddhanta.

In this circumstances the question what is "Hinduism" in Sri Lanka came up for clarification before a special committee appointed by the Government. Consensus was reached as follows :

"The authoritative scriptures of the Saiva religion are the twelve thirumurais and the fourteen Siddhanta Shastras as well as such portions of the Vedas and Saiva Agamas which are not in conflict with the teachings of the thirumurais and Siddhanta Shastras."

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Errata

Page	Error	Correction
Page iv, 20th line	Schieving	Achieving
Page 2, 12th line	too	to
Page 6, Note 1		The division of the Thirumurai into Cantos was done by saint Nambiandar Nambikal of Thiru Naraiyur at the behest of the great king Rajarajah Chola, the Thirumurai Kanda Chola, who retrieved Moovar Thevaram from an ant hill with Divine assistance, and his son Rajendra Cholan I.
Page 20	Pure, (5) (5) Sudden	Suddha Viddhai
Page 28	devinely	divinely
Page 53, 8th line	cantons	cantos
9th line	Canton	Canto
Page 56, line 21	Bengales	bengale
Page 56, last line	Tautras	Tantras



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